WATCH FOR "LOVE'S GUILTY DREAM," BY ADRIENNE ROUCOLLE.

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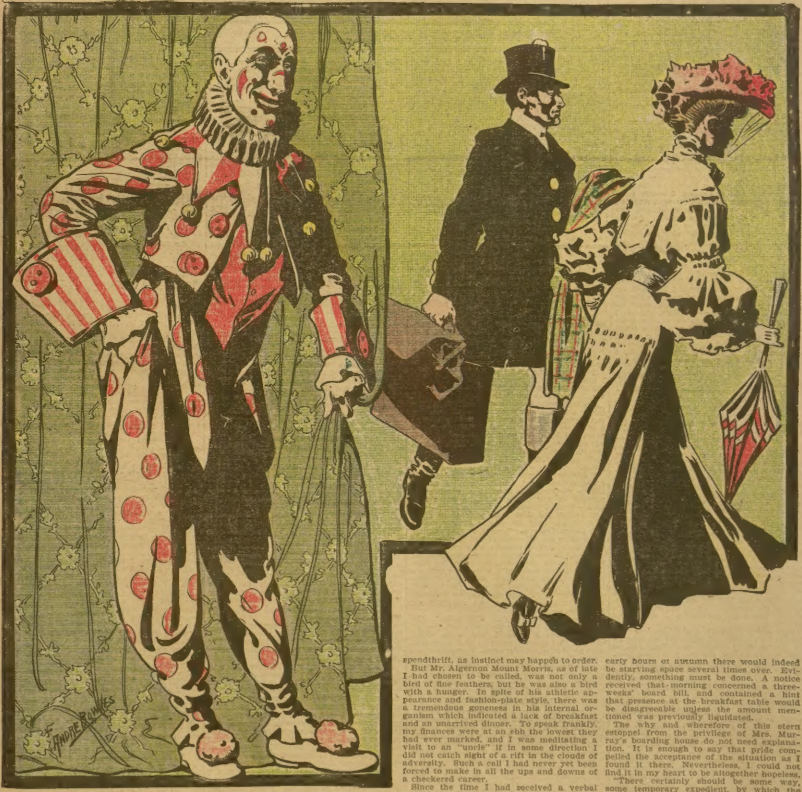
IN MASQUERADE;

OR, THE LUCK OF A FREE LANCE. By William R. Eyster.



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CHAPTER I.

A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

I lounged down the "Rialto," the rendezvous of actors, with what I hoped was all dignity and a good deal of the beauty of a young Apollo. My costume was faultless, and I was aware that I was the object of more than one admiring glance. So far as outward show went, I might have been a mogul millionaire—one of the new brood, young in years, who husband their resources after the manner of the miser, or scatter them according to the way of the spendthrift, as instinct may happen to order.

But Mr. Algernon Mount Morris, as of late I had chosen to be called, was not only a bird of fine feathers, but he was also a bird with a hunger. In spite of his athletic appearance and fashion-plate style, there was a tremendous goneness in his internal organism which indicated a lack of breakfast and an unarrived dinner. To speak frankly, my finances were at an ebb the lowest they had ever marked, and I was meditating a visit to an "uncle" if in some direction I did not catch sight of a rift in the clouds of adversity. Such a call I had never yet been forced to make in all the ups and downs of a checkered career.

Since the time I had received a verbal propulsion from the paternal roof I had been more or less of a soldier of fortune; just now, I was really a "first walking gent," out of an engagement. Of course, I knew there were a dozen managers who would presently be dying to get my signature for the season; but they were keeping quiet for the last stroke of the clock. Between these long summer days and the early hours of autumn there would indeed be starving space several times over. Evidently, something must be done. A notice received that morning concerned a three-weeks' board bill, and contained a hint that presence at the breakfast table would be disagreeable unless the amount mentioned was previously liquidated.

The why and wherefore of this stern estoppel from the privilege of Mrs. Murray's boarding house do not need explanation. It is enough to say that pride compelled the acceptance of the situation as I found it there. Nevertheless, I could not find it in my heart to be altogether hopeless.

"There certainly should be some way, some temporary expedient, by which the chasm can be bridged. If the Parcae will only show me the straw I will provide the clutch of the drowning man."

So I muttered to myself, sinking down upon one of the benches in the square. At that very moment, by chance, my hand touched a paper, abandoned there by some casual reader.

I picked it up carelessly.

The Enduring Spirit of '76 Outlasts the Centuries.

"Better late than never. Let us see whether there is not something which will apply. Anything under the sun will do, from bank cashier here to woodchopper in Oregan—with transportation furnished, of course. Ah, ha! Here is something."

"WANTED—A FOOTMAN—One who understands the care of horses preferred. Apply tomorrow at 2 p. m., Avenue Z, 097. References required."

I looked all through the other wants and then came back to Avenue Z. It was the only thing which offered the least consolation.

"There's not a soul in town who remembers me; if there were one, what difference? When I am made up for my part my own mother wouldn't know me. Thank Heaven, my dunnage is not at Mrs. Murray's! I'll give the thing a whirl, anyhow."

Thinking thus, I strode away. There was yet ample time to put in an appearance at 097 before 2 o'clock.

Of course I found the place without trouble. Indeed, I could hardly have missed it. When I turned into the avenue I could see a crowd in the distance, which looked very like a mob. At the least, there were two score of people in it, all shoving and pushing, and some shouting in no good humor.

I say all, but I suppose I must qualify that a trifle. There were several men struggling to foreclose on the handle of the doorbell; one man was bending over, trying to peer under the closely-drawn curtain of a window; whilst still another was clinging to the branch of a tree on the corner, from which a view of the second floor might possibly be obtained. The house itself had a deserted, silent look, at once making me suspect a practical joke.

However, I had come this far and did not intend to throw away a chance. If a selection was to be made from this mob, I certainly was as likely as any of them to be the lucky man. I strolled forward with a jaunty air in keeping with my assumed character, and halted at the step.

The hour of two was on the stroke, and the crowd, as if by unanimous consent, wedged up closer to the steps. The tall fellow who had conquered at the bell gave a vigorous tug, and in the midst of the hurly-burly I became conscious that two ladies were standing at my shoulder. Distinctly I heard an ejaculation of disgust, followed by the words:

"Dear me! It is a perfect bear garden. What shall we do?"

"Send for a policeman. There seems to be no other way in which the mob can be handled. I declare! One of them is making preparations to enter through the window. You might have expected!"

"A policeman will hardly be competent for the task. I think it will require a regiment of the National Guard, at least."

From a hasty glance I decided the two were mother and daughter. Though they seemed somewhat worried, an undertone of amusement in their voices precluded the idea of much alarm on their pnart. As for the allusion to the man at the window—he really seemed to have burglarious intentions. I listened for the answer; and now the voice of the speaker assumed a tone of mild vexation:

At all events, we cannot get in until this mob has been dispersed."

That settled it with me. I liked the voice, and without a second thought bounded up the steps, seized the would-be intruder by neck and thigh and pitched him over on the heads of the crowd below. Then I caught the fellows who stood at the doorbell, each by a collar, and ran them down to the pavement, sweeping half a dozen stragglers along, and fairly landed them all in the gutter. Springing swiftly back, I gave my hat a touch, remarking in my most stagey brogue:

"Sure, leddies, the way wor opin widout the callin' av the gourd."

They had already slipped up the steps, and the younger was inserting a latch key. The elder beckoned me with her finger.

"Come in at once. I think you are the man I want. We will telephone for the police if this rabble remains."

I tripped up, rather proud of my prowess, though more than half expecting to receive a missile or two on the broad of my back. Had some one begun to shoot I would not have been surprised, and to this day I believe it was fortunate that a tall policeman stalked around the corner. He had no difficulty in managing a crowd which in my heart I was willing frankly to confess had got beyond my capacity. The groan it gave as the door closed behind us was something awful.

"Now, then, who are you, and what do you want?"

It was the elder lady still who spoke to me; but if I had not already decided as to the relationship of the two I might have been less willing to apply the term elder. In my inner self, however, I silently grinned, thinking we were both more or less "made up"—she to conceal the scant, if any, ravages of forty years; I to look any indeterminate age over thirty-five. I responded promptly:

"Considine O'Rourke, shtable bye an' dhriver be thrade, an' willin' to see how Oi kin howld me hand at onnything ilse ye may choose to put me to. It's the advertoisemint; an' av ye wants an illegant, intilligint compethint mon, Oi am the bye. It's bad luck Oi have had, an' the harrud toimes have been most disthrissful."

"Have you a wife?"

"Not at prisint; but av it wor a necessity —sure, Oi think Oi would not find it harrud to obtain wan."

I said this with so much earnestness that the lady smiled; and that smile lit up a face of great beauty. She glanced over at her daughter, who nodded.

"You have hit upon the very qualifications for which I am looking. I am inclined to think that when educated in your duties you would prove both intelligent and competent. If your references are satisfactory I shall at least give you a trial."

"Sure, an' a mon can have rifferinces for onnything, but it's the shkill that counts. Oi wor in a thrainin' shtable in the owld counthry, an' driv' a cab an' ixpriss wagon here. Av ye will thry me a wake you'll know me betther; an' that wor all Oi ask."

I handed her the papers of Considine O'Rourke, candidate, which had last seen the light on the stage at the Follies, away down South, when I was playing in a local skit—"Wanted—A Coachman."

She glanced carelessly at my credentials, and as she looked from them to me I could see by the set of her lips that she had made up her mind. I was truly thankful the drawn curtains dimmed the light so that it was not likely she could detect the weak spots, if any, in my "make-up." I had sufficient confidence in my "dressing," but it had been done in haste. She spoke positively:

"Since writing that advertisement, John, my coachman, whom I had thought of discharging, has left me without warning, and as you seem to take his place I will give you a trial in the stables. Things are probably at sixes and sevens there, and I will not expect too much from you for several days. You will find a suit not far from your size in the coachman's closet. If we come to terms I will see to it your regular outfit is properly provided. Thomas will show you to the stables, and give you any needed information about the house."

When my conductor appeared he proved to be a boy of sixteen, and I do not think he was charmed with my general appearance. He certainly said no more than he had to.

Having the use of my eyes, I cared little for that. On every hand were the indications of wealth; and my room upstairs in the stable was furnished after a fashion which would have made my late landlady turn green with envy if she could have seen it.

John was a fool," I thought to myself, as I looked around. "When I once get in the saddle, Daly will have to bid high if he wants to get me away from here."

I asked some questions in regard to the house and the cuisine, and then turned to my charges. They had been cared for by a man temporarily called in from a livery barn, but I decided at first sight they needed exercise. Mrs. Marchmont seemed of the same opinion. By and by word came that she wished to be driven to Central Park.

I harnessed up and went around to the front of the house, where I arrived as the ladies stepped out upon the stoop. The method of our progress as he came into sight—three bounds and then a lurch—was not reassuring, but they took their seats without showing timidity, allowing me to get down from my perch, as I gallantly essayed to do. Thomas closed the door behind them, and an instant later we were off.

Steady hands on the reins soon brought the horses to their bearings; by the time the park was reached I knew the animals better than I did their mistress. Fortunately, I was acquainted with the ins and outs of the place, and required no explanation of the orders given on entering the carriage.

'Now, drive slowly, O'Rourke," the madame said, leaning forward, and just at that moment I brought my whip down sharply and started forward at a pace that was neither staid nor slow. Some distance away I had caught sight of a driverless team, dashing straight toward the spot where we were almost caught in a jam.

CHAPTER II.

A MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

It was well I was the competent man I had proclaimed myself. To have remained in the crush would have simply meant wreck; an attempt to turn around would only have accelerated the catastrophe.

A dozen bounds of the frightened horses and there was a clear space to my right. At once I swung aside, just in time to avoid the tearing team which dashed past. I had scarcely more than subdued our somewhat startled span when a crash rose above the cries we could hear behind us; then other crashes. I do believe there were a dozen vehicles in trouble.

"Av ye desoires it, me leddy, Oi can tole the tame an' go to the hilp av thim. Oi moight be av some reinfoorcemint."

"Certainly not. The park police will attend to that, to say nothing of the idlers. You have done very well, I must say. John would have allowed us to suffer utter wreck sooner than have moved without orders."

I heard a silvery laugh, and then the voice of the daughter.

'It was just as you ordered him to drive slowly that he applied the lash. What kind of discipline are you introducing now?"

I straightened myself up, having no desire to hear comments on my course. I knew I had not hurt my standing with my employer.

"Drive on slowly, now," was the order a moment later; and looking neither to the right nor the left, though actually taking in everything in sight, I moved on from the spot.

Before I had gone a dozen yards I was again face to face with a test. I am glad to say I stood the ordeal without sign of error.

A young man strolling toward us looked up questioningly. I knew him on the instant. It was Reggie Algire, a young blood I had met in New Orleans a winter ago. Did he remember me?

For the moment I could have sworn that he did. I caught a puzzled look on his face; then he gave me a nod and a wave of his hand.

I sat bolt upright, stiff as a switch stand, and was driving on when I heard my employer:

"Stop, O'Rourke!"

I suspected the truth as I saw Algire step toward the carriage. Lucky for me I had not betrayed myself.

"Mrs. Marchmont! Miss Lorena! This is an unexpected pleasure."

He spoke cordially, and the way he was received showed that he was on intimate terms with the family.

So the daughter's name was Lorena! I thought of the old song I had hummed so many times in the past; but though this young lady was handsome, I doubted if I could ever fancy her strongly.

I was not very susceptible by nature, and in spite of some shady environments, which at times had been mine by right of chance and profession, I was rather a clean, healthy-hearted young man, if I must say it myself. I had been sought in my time, as you can well believe if you know anything of the stage, and the opportunities of even its minor lights; and such miserable intrigues as might be interesting enough to the young man of average morals always rose against my gorge.

Mrs. Marchmont had made no mistake in taking me into her house. I would not be apt to turn my eyes toward her daughter.

At that I stopped, puzzled. How about the lady herself? At the moment I showed no more emotion outwardly than the head of a pump, yet I was aware that this woman, whom I had met that afternoon for the first time in my life, held an influence over me stronger than I had ever before felt.

A lady? Of course she was a lady. I could see it in every turn of her lip, every movement of her shapely hands, every word which fell from between her clearly-cut lips.

And proud? I knew that, too. It was worth something to be her servant, and chuckle over the gulf she imagined to be between us. But if she ever found out! I had only known her a couple of hours, and already I had resolved she never should.

Meantime, I was not of the kind to overhear a conversation in which I could not join, and I stared straight forward, mentally closing my ears. Nevertheless, I did catch a few words, through no desire of mine, just in the moment before Reggie turned away.

"He was in a very ugly humor when I saw him, and you can depend upon it there will be trouble in the air. I only mention it that you may be on your guard."

"Thank you; good-day," was Mrs. Marchmont's reply, and Algire stepped off as jauntily as he had approached.

Those few words were not much to found a theory on, but it seemed to me I could scent a mystery. Certainly, I detected an uneasy feeling in the tones of the lady. A few moments later we left the park and paced sedately homeward.

That night, as I laid my head on the pillow, which was soft and white but which was in a stable nevertheless, I wondered what my venerable parents would think could they see me then. I knew mother would weep; I suspected father would swear in his grand old antebellum way—always provided there was no one in sight to take stock of their doings. In the face of the world they could be stoical as Spartans, and die before showing a wound.

As for myself—well, here I was, the possible heir to a million or more, living in a barn and touching my hat to a mistress; consorting with a cook, and a page, and others of that ilk, and doomed to a livery; all because I had attempted to be immovable when met by the irresistible; because, once upon a time, I wanted my way—and took it. If I had behaved myself there was no reason why I should not be looking forward to dancing at the Patriarchs the next winter; and perhaps handing Mrs. Marchmont and Lorena to supper. I smiled grimly as I thought of it, wondering vaguely if, after all, the Marchmonts were quite enough in the swim to be met at such a place.

They were wealthy, I knew well enough, but I was not so sure they were of the creme de la creme as recorded by McAllister. If they were, what held them in town this time in the year?

Revolving such matters I fell asleep. Two or three hours later I awoke with the consciousness there was some one in the room.

Fortunately, I was self-possessed as you please, realizing just where I was and what was most likely the matter. An intruder there was apt to be of the more brutal class of burglars. If there were two, they would doubtless be willing to murder on the off chance of finding five dollars in my pocket. I quietly withdrew a revolver from its resting place under my pillow, and, seeing an indistinct figure between me and the window, had it covered in a second.

"Hands up!" I shouted. "Move a shtip an' ye're a did mon."

"Beg your pardon," responded a voice, and the speaker appeared to be a great deal cooler than I was.

"Seems a slight mistake here. You are not John."

"Oi'm not John; the betther for him, be the same towkin. Who are you?"

His tones had seemed disguised. For a moment I thought of the scapegrace son of the stage, and wondered whether John had been the faithful servitor who looked after the interests of the outcast to his own undoing. When the answer came it suggested something of the kind, though telling nothing positively.

"I am an old friend of the former coachman, whose place you seem to have taken. I have my ups and downs in the world, and when down John has always made room for me. You wouldn't like to accommodate me for the night, I suppose?"

"Not av Oi know mesilf. March out wid ye; an' Oi will drap yez a fall from the windy av ye don't."

"All right. Glad to see you are a sensible fellow. Your mistress would not want to see her name in the paper connected with a coroner's inquest. I'm going. Here's the key. If John is dispossessed I don't suppose it will be of further use to me."

He tossed the key over his head and stepped away. I heard him going down the stairs and out on the street, never troubling himself to lighten his footfalls an atom.

Quite at my leisure I followed, to see that the door was properly shut and locked. Perhaps I had done wrong to allow him to depart with no closer inspection, but I had recognized the force of what he said about the widow not wishing her name to figure in the report of a police court or a coroner's jury. And then, I was new to the place, and was aware there was such a thing as being officious overmuch. I went back to bed, falling asleep again after considerable thought, to wake only, and safe, at daybreak.

About the middle of the morning Mrs. Marchmont called for me. I had already discovered my position was no sinecure, but had taken hold with prompt understanding. Having been a lightning change artist at one period of my variegated career would, I fancied, be of some assistance. When the message came it found me in gloves, overalls and short jacket. In the shortest space possible I appeared, smooth and sleek, in my uniform.

Mrs. Marchmont seemed to be well satisfied as she looked me over.

"Mr. O'Rourke, I have taken you into service on short notice and without much investigation. I needed some one at once, and you pleased me by the promptness with which you relieved a somewhat disagreeable situation. The judgment employed in a case of danger during our drive confirmed my good opinion. Discretion with the tongue is not usually a crowning virtue of your race, but if I find it in you I will consider you an ideal assistant."

"Sure, an' av it suithed ye Oi could be doumb ontoirely."

"Oh, no. I do not ask quite that much. But be careful of your associations. Maxwell, who preceded you in the stabales, had some undesirable acquaintances, and it was a relief to me that he left. Perhaps he did so to get rid of them. I hope you will not take them up."

"No danger. Wan av thim visited me the last noight, onder a misthonderstandin' av the situation. He had a key lift him by John, an' whin Oi gave him the choice av the door or the windy he give me the key an' tuk the door."

I knew then I had not been entirely mistaken in my suppositions. In spite of wonderful self-possession, there were evident signs of agitation, and Mrs. Marchmont gave a swift glance toward Lorena. What she might have said I cannot guess, for an interruption cut off answer to me entirely. An individual whom Thomas had admitted came striding along the hall and threw open the door with an ungentle wrench. He was tall, broad-shouldered as myself, and had it not been for lines on his face, telling of dissipation and cruelty, he might have been considered boldly handsome.

He looked around with an appearance of possessorship I did not altogether like, yet there was a certain indefinable air which marked the intruder. I turned to Mrs. Marchmont.

"Give me the wink, yer leddyship, an' out he goes."

"Get out of here yourself, Paddy, or I'll take you all apart!" exclaimed the stranger savagely. "Her ladyship happens to be my wife."

CHAPTER III.

FORWARD, AT ALL HAZARDS.

At this astounding revelation—if revelation it was—I saw Mrs. Marchmont whiten for a moment to the roots of her hair. Yet, behind the agonized look in her eyes, there was something which told that though she might be on the defensive she had no thought of surrender. Had there been signs of wavering I would have retired, in spite of a quiet gesture from Miss Leona. It is an ill thing to interfere between man and wife.

There was a triumphant devil in the old man's face that made me forget all that. We were fairly well matched in build, and I judged I was in the better condition, but I could hardly expect to evict him without a brawl which would be more or less unseemly in such a place. Nevertheless, I was hoping for aggressive orders when I folded my arms, without seeming to pay attention to him, and quietly remarked:

"Shpake the worrud, me leddy; av ye don't want to shpake it say nothin' at all, at all. It's me own thinkin' he's a bloody inthruder."

"Yes, speak to him, do—and order him to have his skull crushed. I am in no humor for foolishness."

This in just his ordinary tone; but it was to throw me off my guard. Without warning, as he thought, he suddenly dashed in, striking as he came.

"Throw him out, Considine," I heard Mrs. Marchmont coldly say, as I countered, striking with only half my reach, but sending in the blow good and strong, landing on the point of the jaw. I lifted him fairly off his feet and stretched him straight out, half-way through the open door.

Then I rushed in and caught him up as though I had all my life been a professional bouncer. As my lady had remarked, I began to see that my duties were "varied"; but so long as they were legitimate and of the situation, I intended to show competency for all of them.

Educated by the practice of the previous day, and inspired by the cause, I deported the man from the room with neatness and dispatch, carried him down the front steps and deposited him with average gentleness on the pavement.

"Now get out wid ye or we'll call the police," was my advice; and, for a wonder, he took it. The blow had not altogether knocked him out, but he went away in a somewhat dazed condition, muttering a threat which I did not think it worth while to seem to hear. The speed and ease with which I had handled him had broken his brutal spirit for the time being.

Once assured he did not at present intend to make more trouble, I closed the door and returned to the conference, which had been interrupted rather than concluded.

The ladies were where I had left them, both a trifle pale. Miss Lorena was the first to speak. She came straight forward, holding out as pretty a palm as I would ever ask to grasp.

"Mr. O'Rourke, shake hands. I humbly apologize for having rather underrated you. I have received a gratification for which I scarcely know how to be thankful enough, and I believe I can say the same thing for mother. But oh! do be careful. The wretch will try his best to have revenge, and will not care how he takes it."

The efflorescence of gratitude was rather overpowering. I scarcely knew how to act, especially as Mrs. Marchmont remained silent. I managed to stammer out something about having been sorry to hit the lady's father, and was hardly prepared for the look of intense scorn which I received.

"Stop! I repudiate that entirely. He may be my mother's husband, but certainly is no father of mine. He is simply her unworthy second. When mother found him out she got rid of him as well as she could, portioning him off a good deal more liberally than he had a right to expect, and he has now no rights here. If you care to remain with such a duty ahead of you, throw him out whenever he comes. I am sure mother will endorse the order and trust in your discretion. There are not a dozen in New York who know the secret you have just learned."

I had not thought her capable of the excitement which she showed. Her face flushed, her eyes flashed, her hand, which still clasped mine, unwittingly, no doubt, was quivering. I thought I had never in my life seen a more beautiful young woman.

"You forget yourself, Lorena," calmly interposed Mrs. Marchmont. "Of course we are grateful to Mr. O'Rourke; but he has probably learned to take such things as matters of course. Nevertheless"—turning to me—"I would have you understand I endorse what my daughter has said. Watch yourself or you may be paid off tenfold. Unless you have special orders to the contrary, you will never go wrong in keeping that individual out of the house. He shall neither bully nor force me to alter in one jot the contract he has signed. If he makes his way in here after dark, shoot him down."

Her feelings began to overpower her again. The concentrated tone of hate in which this last order was given showed me every word was meant, and when I looked at her, and thought of him, I felt for the moment that whatever might be the cost I would obey to the letter. Nevertheless, I must have appeared a little foolish as I stood there to be pelted with acknowledgments. Though controlling myself fairly well, I was glad to be dismissed with a benediction and the information I would not be wanted again that morning.

Back at the stable, with overalls resumed, I began to think matters over as calmly as I could.

Repugnant though it was to delve among their private affairs, I made up my mind I must know more about this family before deciding on my future course. At first, I had thought that if I remained a week I could accumulate a little capital that, carefully husbanded, might see me over the worst of the barrens on which I was wandering; and I would have had rather a jolly lark. Now I began to fancy perhaps it might not be such a bad thing to rest in this haven until the days of fall engagements came around. Then, if managers nor fates proved propitious, why, confound them! I might remain Considine O'Rourke indefinitely, even if I did not continue to be a coachman.

The day passed along without further adventure. In the evening I obtained permission to absent myself to look after my impedimenta. I accomplished that in short order, and then made the acquaintance of "my uncle," leaving with him some articles which I could readily spare. After that I went to a detective agency of which I knew something, but where it was not likely Considine O'Rourke, whose money was as good as that of another, would be recognized. In a week I would no doubt know all about the Marchmonts, and something about the man who claimed to be my employer's husband. That was what the clerk told me; and I had a great deal of confidence in the astuteness of Mr. Beamish and the industry of his staff.

As I strode away, up Broadway, independent as you please in spite of my disguise, for the first time in years I felt what you might call a twinge of homesickness. How strange it seemed! Here was I, down about as low as I could well get and preserve any self-respect, and homeward bound from a pawnbroker's, yet admitting to myself I was too proud to play the role of the prodigal, though I had an idea I would meet with as warm a reception at home. I felt I would never rise in the profession I had so foolishly adopted, and was meanwhile cutting myself off from anything of a future. There were other women than Mrs. Marchmont, who might be years younger and able to attract me still more, yet they would never be for me. Why, for the time being I was actually mad to break away from the life of the past few years, and at that moment if I could have come face to face with the old gentleman it is just possible I would have fallen on his neck and shouted.

I got over that, however. The nearer I came to Avenue Z the less I realized that I had anything to bemoan. As I turned the corner I became Considine O'Rourke once more, coachman by profession and guardian of two as lovely females as I cared to know. A trifle later I lokoed up from the stable to the house where all was silent and slumberous. Nevertheless, the spirit of disquietude was upon me at the moment, and it struck me that it might not be amiss to look about a little before retiring in my own humbler quarters.

To my surprise, as I approached the building some one came out of the door at the rear, and was slipping away, gripsack in hand. At second glance I recognized Thomas. Ordinarily, I would have stopped the boy, but something in his movements and manner suggested it might be well to do otherwise. Lurking in the shadows I allowed the youth to pass, and then noiselessly entered the house.

Of course, if I was mistaken in my suspicions I might raise a causeless alarm; if I went blundering on there was no telling how soon I might be shot as a thief.

Despite such dangers, the openness of the path led me on, finding my way by a faintly gleaming light in the upper hallway. At the foot of the stairway I stopped for a moment to listen, and then broke away in silent haste, bounding up two steps at a time. I had heard voices above; and one of them was the voice of a man.

Above, a glow rather than a gleam of light coming through the aperture left by a scantily opened door, showed me which way to turn. Pushing open the door still farther, a low medley of sounds was audible in an adjoining room. Faintly though the noises came, I could distinguish them apart. There was low, hurried breathing for the first; also the rustle of feminine draperies, above which rose what I rightly guessed was the thud of a bell handle, pulled by a nervous hand. Then a low, wicked voice:

"I am giving you plenty of time because, as I willingly confess, I do not want to kill you. That bell wire has been cut, and your bully of the barn is provided for. The burglar alarm has been doctored, and the men with me would take care of it if any assistance should come. It seems ridiculous that I should have done it, but there is no law in the land which would punish me for breaking into my own house. So, my dear wife, at last I mean to have a little confidential conversation with you, after which we may decide to better advantage what the next move shall be."

Very distinctly did I hear all this, and very devoutly did I wish for the revolver that was under my pillow in the stable. It was most likely that the mention of his companions was no idle threat, and if this fellow was her rightful husband it was certain that the liberty, and most likely the life, of the lady were in danger. When Mrs. Marchmont spoke, I was glad to see there was no tremor in her tones, and that most likely the width of the room separated the two. I listened eagerly, hoping that her words might in some way indicate what course I had best pursue.

"I do not fear you, Marcus Whetstone, and I give you fair warning that if you kill me you will not only risk punishment for the crime, but even if it passes unsuspected it will not profit you. My death ends your pension. I do not care to explain the true condition of affairs, but I swear to you this is the truth. More than that. I may be willing to overlook this intrusion now; I never will again. Attempt to bring yourself and me into closer relation than that which has existed and one of us dies. I am a desperate woman, who has so far held her own against you and the rest of the world, and I intend to keep that up to the end. If you are wise you will go your way quietly, and at once."

So the man's name was Whetstone! He laughed a low, bitter laugh, and went on recklessly:—

"But I tell you, I do not care a whiffet how soon death comes, so it hits both of us. There is a desperate pair of us, and I have stood your nonsense too long. You must bend or break."

"And how, pray, is this bending to be accomplished?"

"To be frank with you, had not things gone wrong, by this time you would have been quietly and unconsciously removed to your husband's domicile. It may not be as magnificent as this, but the home influence would be decidedly superior."

"And as it is?"

"You will go with me quietly, and all the same."

By this time I was looking in upon them. I had made certain his assistant ruffians, if he had any, were not in the room with me; and it was hardly likely they were with him. My only fear was that they might have Lorena in their power. Otherwise, it seemed strange she had not come in evidence.

Mrs. Marchmont was cool as you please. In her turn she laughed—a bitter, joyless laugh—and carelessly waved her hand between them.

"The day for such folly is past. You may have been a grand master in such spells, but I have learned a thing or two since then; and, sir"—taking a step toward him—"in such things, if anything, I am your master. Any old influence you may have had is done with forever. Now that you know it you had best remember. Every threat I have made will be made good to the limit, and it is only I have no weapon to hand that there is a chance for you to go out of this house alive."

He glared at her savagely, forced to believe in the truth of what she said, yet unwilling to desist or attempt brutal physical force. After all, he was playing his hand as carefully as he knew how, and could not believe, even yet, that he would not win.

As for her, she spoke harsh, wicked words; and yet she could have done no better. They were her only weapons, and she had to wield them as best she could.

"There is one thing you forget, my dear," he said, after a brief silence. "If I cannot bend or break, I can hang you. Sooner than have you conquer, by the heavens! I will do it. I have played the fool long enough for the sake of the paltry sum you have flung me out of your millions. All other means first, fair or foul. Afterward—that!"

He hissed out his ultimatum with a vicious anger which had been kept down till now, but which would soon carry him away in spite of himself. I saw the crisis was coming; that he would be apt to use less of threat and more of violence for the future; and that it was time to act. There was no further knowledge of his schemes which Mrs. Marchmont would be likely to obtain from him by prolonging the interview, and I was not certain how soon her nerves would fail. I drew myself together for a spring.

At that same instant, a woman's scream—it was from the lips of Lorena—rang through the house, and a pair of strong arms were thrown around me from behind. Despite my caution, a foe had taken me unawares.

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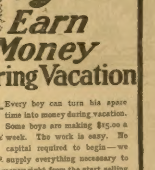
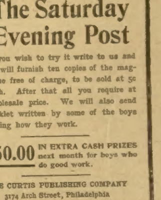


Miss Smother—Oh, how I admire a physically perfect man! It must be grand—



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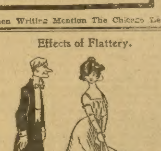

"And broad shoulders!"

Pointed Paragraphs.

Some die of heart failure and some live with head failure.

Nothing jars a man like being compelled to love by contract.

It isn't always the best actress that gets the most followers.

Somehow a man generally loses his nerve just when he needs it most.

In order to start the political machine one must drop dollars in the slot.

Every time a man calls his wife an angel she thinks he's been drinking.

A good many things are bad enough, but the worst never really happens.

No artist should attempt to select a living model unless he understands figures.

The earth's population doubles every two hundred and sixty years.

Ruby Gordon's Love;

Or

The Mistakes of a Life-Time.

By LIBBIE SPRAGUE PHILLIPS.

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CHAPTER IV.

Poor ill-fated Ruby! Over and over again she read the letter of explanation which Lawrence had sent her, trying hard to realize what it all meant. That fatal marriage notice, which had worked such irreparable wrong, had been cut from the paper and enclosed in the letter; and as she read it and began to understand whose had been the deep, underhanded treachery that had been the cause of Lawrence's rash marriage, a feeling that was as near akin to hatred as anything that gentle Ruby Gordon was capable of feeling sprang up within her heart against this Leslie Darrell.

They had been lifelong friends, and he and Lawrence had long been rival suitors for her hand. To Lawrence she had given the deep, true, earnest love of her heart, while this other friend had been esteemed most highly. But she now felt that she could never forgive the bitter wrong that he had done.

She had long felt that old Reuben Armytage was half demented, and she could well understand his part in the deeply-laid plot; she could also understand one of Lawrence's nature, hot-tempered, passionate and proud, committing in a moment of reckless despair a rash act such as he had committed, but she could not understand how love could lead one to do a deed that would break the heart of the object of that love; for by Leslie Darrell's treacherous deed her life was darkened—ruined.

She now recalled the dark, sullen look that had come over his face when she told him that she was engaged to Lawrence. His eyes had gleamed like fire and his voice was hoarse with passion as he said:

"But you shall never be his wife, Ruby Gordon, never! I shall see to that!"

She had regarded the words at the time as an idle threat, but she now realized how true they had been.

She took up the letter again and let her eyes rest for a long time on the words with which it began: "My dearly loved and lost darling." Ah! they were indeed lost to each other. They would meet often, but they must meet as acquaintances only. Could they do it, when once they had been all the world to each other? If Lawrence had been false in his love to her and had married this girl because he had learned to love her better than herself she would resolutely have torn his image from her heart and would have set herself the task of forgetting him. But knowing the truth as she now did, she felt that to forget him would be impossible, and to meet him knowing that another woman was his wife would be worse than death. Ah! what a life lay before them—a life of vain longings and still vainer regrets.

She folded her arms upon the window sill and laid her aching head upon them. No tears fell from her eyes, for she had wept until she could weep no more. Her face was ghastly pale and her features seemed to have become petrified into a cast of despair. Long she sat there—so long that minutes ran into hours and the summer afternoon melted into evening. She was trying to form some plan for the future, but she could not, as it seemed to her that the future held nothing worth living for.

Death does not come at will, or it surely would have come to her. Life was a boon she no longer prized. But she must bear its burden, so she took up her old duties in a kind of weary apathy which, it seemed, nothing could ever break.

Her dread of meeting with Lawrence kept her a great deal within doors. But one morning, feeling the need of making some purchases in the village, she chose an early hour, thinking that the inmates of the Elmwood mansion would not be astir at this time, and started forth.

There was a path through the grove that was much nearer than to go by the highway, but as this grove belonged to the Elmwood estate she hesitated about going that way.

But its leafy coolness looked so inviting that she finally took the woodland path. How beautiful was the face of Nature this morning! The wild flowers were blooming beneath her feet, the birds were singing above her head; and with the dewy freshness of the morning her spirits could not fail to be somewhat enlivened; and feeling better than she had before in many days, she went slowly through the grove, enjoying as best she could its sylvan beauties.

How often in the past she and Lawrence had walked this same leafy pathway together! Those happy, happy days were over and gone and their paths in life were widely divided now. With this thought in her heart she paused and looked back. Her mind was again filled with thoughts of him and once again she fell to dreaming of the past.

But from this dream she had a rude awakening. The sound of footsteps falling on her ears brought her back to herself with a start, and on turning round she found herself face to face with Leslie Darrell.

She had dreaded a meeting with him almost as much as she had dreaded meeting with Lawrence Armytage. She stepped back with a stifled exclamation, but he caught her hand in his and his face beamed.

"Ruby," he said, softly, "this is indeed good fortune! I did not expect to meet you. I was going over to your place to see you; now I will turn and walk back to the village with you. I may, may I not?"

"I suppose so," she answered, in a hesitating way, "but really, Mr. Darrell——"

"Mr. Darrell!" he interrupted, reproachfully. "What is the matter? You have always called me Leslie before."

"Well, you may be thankful that I do not call you 'villain' now." And the tone of her voice betrayed how great was her agitation.

He looked uneasy. He understood her perfectly and knew how senseless it would be to feign ignorance of the meaning of her words.

"So you think I have played the part of a villain, do you, Ruby? Well, remember that it was my great love for you that caused me to do the deed. Have you any idea how much I love you?"

"I have not. A love like yours is something I cannot understand—a love that causes one to do a deadly wrong to the object of that love. Leslie Darrell, why did you do such a wicked thing?"

"You know well enough why I did it. I want you for myself. That marriage notice shall be repeated some day and it will then tell the truth. I——"

"Never! You must be insane to think that I——"

"Wait!" and he raised his hand with a commanding gesture. "Hear me through. You may not understand how I dared to do as I did, but you must understand the mightiness of the love that urged me on. It is a love such as Lawrence Armytage, weak, vain, proud, independent fool that he is, could never have felt if he had loved you with all his heart."

Ruby's eyes were blazing now.

"How dare you," she cried, "speak such words of Lawrence in my presence! He is——"

"Defend him if you will," he again interrupted, "but your own heart must tell you he is a fool. Sensible men do not marry as he did. I knew him well—knew just what the hot-headed fool would do if he believed that you were false to him. Ruby, you deserve a husband with more strength of mind and purpose than he has shown."

"Never mind what I deserve; what I desire is the thought to be considered. And if I were to marry now I should desire a man with more honor than you have shown. Lawrence did a rash, foolish thing, I own, but he is an honorable man. And, having loved a man like him, I cannot so easily transfer my affections to one like you, dishonorable as you have shown yourself to be."

Darrell sneered.

"Then you call Lawrence Armytage an honorable man! Do you think that his sense of honor is so great that he will be true in thought, word and deed to the innocent girl whom he has married? I doubt not that long before this he has sought your presence with his weak, senseless excuses for what he has done, and with words of undying love on his lips."

"That shows how far your depraved mind has led you astray, for he has done no such thing."

"But he will. And you will listen to him, and you will both forget that another woman has the right to his love. Talk to me of honor! You, yourself, will soon learn how weak a thing it is when assailed by the temptation of a mighty love!"

He had kept close to her side while talking, and he now paused in his walk and sought to take her hand.

"But why should we quarrel?" he continued. "I love you too well for that. Give yourself to me, Ruby, and I will make your life so happy that, in time, you will bless me for what you now call a dishonorable act."

Proudly she drew herself back.

"If you were the last man on earth and I were the last woman," she answered in ringing tones, "I would not be your wife. I despise you! I wonder at myself that I ever called you friend."

They were both greatly agitated, and neither of them heard the footsteps that were approaching behind them.

"But you shall not always scorn my love!" he cried. "Thus far my plans have worked well. I have but to scheme a little farther and I shall as easily cause you to become my wife as I caused Lawrence Armytage to become the husband of another. I would win you by fair means if I could, but marry me you shall!"

He grasped her arm as he spoke, and the next instant a well-directed blow from behind sent him headlong upon the ground.

"You scoundrel!" and Lawrence Armytage—for it was he who had come upon them—bent over him with blazing wrath and indignation stamped on every feature. "Scoundrel, liar, traitor!" he hissed, "I ought to kill you where you lie!"

Ruby stifled the scream that rose to her lips as soon as she saw whose hand had dealt the blow. But when, the next instant, Darrell had risen to his feet and faced his assailant with a murderous gleam in his eyes, all unconsciously she sprang to Lawrence's side, and, grasping his arm, she cried: "Oh, Lawrence!"

Lawrence had not once removed his eyes from the face of his foe. "Stand back!" he cried, as Darrell with a muttered curse sprang toward him, "I do not care to quarrel with you in her presence. Were it not for that I would give you the thrashing you deserve!" And he threw one arm around Ruby's form in a protecting way, while with the other he motioned him back.

Darrell paused and with a mocking sneer on his handsome face said: "Too bad your wife canot see you now!" Then turning to Ruby he added: "Oh, the boasted honor of you two! Did I not tell you how it would be?"

Lawrence was now nearly beside himself with rage and but for Ruby's clinging hands he would have dealt him another blow.

"Ah, yes," Darrell again sneered, as he saw the threatening look on Lawrence's face, "you can be very brave when a woman stands between you and all possible harm! We cannot fight in your presence, it is true; but we shall meet again—then beware!"

And with these words he turned and left them, muttering curses as he did so.

Ruby now drew herself from Lawrence's protecting arms. A sick, faint sensation of deepest despair came over her, and she did did not restrain the tears that would fall from her eyes.

Lawrence stood for a moment and gazed in silence at the white, pitiful face.

"I heard what you said to that sneak, and I am glad to know that you scorn him as he deserves to be scorned. I have lost you, myself"—here he paused, as a great sob threatened to choke him—"but I would rather see you dead," he continued, at length, "than married to him, now that I know him for what he is! Promise me, Ruby—I have no right to ask it, I know—but promise me that you will never change your mind and become the wife of such a man."

"I hate him! I shall never marry him—I shall never marry any one now."

Lawrence made no reply, but stood with downcast eyes and with a thoughtful expression on his face. He was wondering what he could say to this sweet girl who had been so terribly wronged, whose happiness had been completely destroyed.

"A life of torture lies before us, Ruby," he said, at length, "and that cowardly villain shall yet be made to suffer for his part in the deeply-laid plot which has worked out our eternal misery. But, Ruby," and he grasped her hands and held them closely, "it would lighten my burden of woe a little to hear you say that you forgive me for believing, as I did, that you had been false to me."

"I forgive you, Lawrence, but oh! how could you have doubted me! How could you! And yet there appeared to be absolute proof of my falseness. They both ought to suffer for what they have done—the traitor who has just left us and the deluded old man whom you call father. And yet, what good would it do us? It would not bring back even one little hour of the old-time peace and joy. What is done cannot be undone, Lawrence. We are hopelessly divided!"

The truth of her words struck a chill to his aching heart. He had suffered much, but never as now. He loved this girl dearer than life. He longed to take her in his arms and kiss her tears away; but he must not—honor forbade it.

"The world before me is all darkness now," Ruby continued; "the only ray of light to cheer me is that you loved me—you were not false in your love."

"Yes, I loved you!" he cried, in suppressed emotion, "and—God help me!—I love you yet!"

"But there will come a time, Lawrence, when you will not; that is, not as you do now; a time when your wife will have won your love from me. This is right, but oh! the bitterness of the cruel thought. I cannot bear it, Lawrence—I cannot! I am wicked to feel in this way, wicked to talk in this way to you; but, oh! we have been so terribly wronged. The fault is not ours."

Here a flood of tears choked her voice, and leaning her head against the trunk of a tree she wept bitterly.

There was nothing that Lawrence could say, but, with a heart torn with anguish, he stood close by her side, and after the bitter weeping had ceased, he again took her hands.

"We must say good-by, Ruby—you and I. Can we?"

"We must. But—— Oh, Lawrence!"

Her voice failed her again. This was the last talk they must ever have together on the subject of their love. She felt wicked and guilty because of this intervieew. But it had been unsought, and the few endearing words that had passed between them might be excusable, but they must meet thus never again. This farewell that was about to be spoken was for all time as far as their love was concerned, a farewell to all that made life worth living.

"My lost darling!" There was unutterable sadness in Lawrence's voice as he said this; then, without another word, he folded her closely within his arms and the tears fell from his eyes over the dear, white face as he silently pressed his lips to hers. Had the coffin lid been about to hide the dear face from his sight forever he could not have felt worse. Neither of them could say the word farewell. After one long, last, lingering look into each other's eyes he released her, and each went their separate ways—alone.

CHAPTER V.

Old Reuben Armytage smiled to himself as he stood by the window in his room one morning and saw Lawrence and his wife walking together on the terrace. "He is a man of sense, anyway," he said. "He is going to make the best of the situation, and with better grace than I thought he would. Perhaps in time he may completely forget his love for Ruby Gordon."

With these thoughts the old man fell to musing. Had he, himself, ever forgotten the one love of his life? Could he, even yet, recall that wondrously beautiful face that had for a while brightened his home, without a feeling of intense longing and despair—despair because that for which he longed could never be again?

He walked two or three times across the floor and then came back to the window. Lawrence and his wife were walking toward the house now, and as Lawrence raised his face, the old man detected an unmistakable look of weariness stamped upon it.

That look had never been there in the old days when he had roamed over the old place with Ruby Gordon. And a look of thoughtfulness took the place of the satisfied expression that had before rested on the old man's face.

"We must have a few visitors," he told himself. "They will claim his attention and he will have no time to brood over his trouble." And after breakfast he mentioned the idea to Lawrence and Bessie.

"And a ball, papa!" exclaimed Bessie as she came close to his side. She had, in the beginning of her life at Elmwood, formed the habit of calling him papa, and the old man seemed to like it. "I think you should give a ball in our honor!"

"The very thing!" he answered. "I wonder that I did not think of it before. Well, you and Lawrence talk it over; he will know whom to invite. And your sister, Bessie—I believe you said you had a grown-up sister—why not invite her here to spend the remainder of the summer with you?"

"You dear, darling old papa!" And Bessie twined her white arms about the old man's neck and gave him a kiss that brought the tears to his eyes, for it was many years since he had felt the touch of a woman's lips upon his face. "Nothing would please me better. I will write to Addie at once."

And she did. A long letter to Addie Vincent, describing the beauties of the old place and telling her that she, too, was to enjoy its luxuries for a while, was sent that very morning. Addie would come, she knew; and the thought of having her sister with her brought a happier look to her face than it had worn before since she came to Elmwood.

She looked forward to the ball with the eagerness of a child, although her spirits were somewhat dampened by the disinterested way in which Lawrence talked about it. Only once had he shown any interest in the coming event, and that was when Ruby Gordon was mentioned as a possible guest.

"Of course she must be invited," Bessie had said; "but, Lawrence, do you think she will come?"

Lawrence looked up quickly with the light of glad expectancy gleaming in his eyes; a moment later it faded and the old saddened look came back, increased tenfold.

"You are right; she must be invited," he answered, "but it is hardly probable that she will come." And Bessie knew, as he turned away and gazed from the window in thoughtful silence, that he was wondering if her coming would give him pain or pleasure.

She, herself, wished for Ruby to come. She knew that every one in the neighborhood was acquainted with the circumstances of their marriage, and that the hatred which she and Ruby would probably feel for each other was talked about at every social gathering. She was very sensitive, and the thought that every one believed that her heart was constantly torn with jealous feelings toward her husband's former love was a torturing thought to her. Of course, every one knew that she was an unloved wife. This was terrible, but no woman likes to have the world believe that she is jealous; and it was the chief ambition of Bessie Armytage to show the people that she was not, and she could think of no better way in which to do this than to be friendly with Ruby Gordon.

But she was jealous. She knew it. There were times when the thought that her husband's heart must ever remain in this girl's keeping made her feel actually desperate; times when she felt that she would like to clasp her two little white hands around the throat of her rival and choke out her very life. But the world must not know this; it should not. No one should ever guess that she suffered untold agony because of her husband's lack of love for her. And she shut her white teeth together hard, firmly resolving that she would be friendly with Ruby Gordon if she could.

Ruby had never called upon her, and, although she had now been at Elmwood four whole weeks, she had never seen her but once. That was one morning when she and Lawrence had driven past the Gordon cottage where Ruby was standing on the vine-wreathed porch watering some plants. She and Lawrence had bowed to each other, that was all, then she had turned her face away. But in that brief glance Bessie had noted the fact that she was strikingly beautiful in face and form; and she knew that she, herself, would look pale and insignificant beside this magnificent creature.

This added another pang to her already overburdened heart, and again she had to battle with the rebellious feelings that so often flooded her soul. "Ah, well," she concluded as she again conquered herself, "in this world one cannot have everything, but when one comes to think about it, the good things of life are divided in a very curious way. She has beauty, talent and wit, and the love that should be mine, while I have the comforts and the luxuries of the home that should be hers." Then her eyes wandered, as they often did, around the luxuriantly furnished rooms. They were something wonderful in contrast to the home which she had left. Toil, wants and privations would never more fall to her lot; she ought to be content; she would be if only a little love were added—"just a little"—she moaned, and too big, pitiful tears rolled over her face, to be hastily dashed aside. She would not spoil what little beauty she did possess by weeping, thus making herself look faded and careworn, she decided; besides, when Lawrence detected a trace of tears on her face he always sighed and looked so miserable that it gave her a guilty feeling; so she had also decided that she would hide her unhappiness from him.

For many days she puzzled her mind as to how she was to form an acquaintance with Ruby Gordon. If she trusted to meeting her at the ball she might be disappointed, for she might not come; and, as she greatly desired that she should be among her guests, she felt that if she could come to know her at once she might induce her to attend.

So, with this thought in her mind, she took to wandering past the Gordon cottage whenever she went for a walk, and one day fortune favored her. As she drew near the place she saw Ruby gathering some flowers which were growing in picturesque confusion all about the yard. She would speak to her now. This was the opportunity she had sought.

"Good morning, Miss Gordon," she called, advancing to the rustic gateway. "I am going to take a great liberty this morning and ask you for a few violets. My sister is coming to visit me, and, as she is passionately fond of their perfume, I would like some for her room, and we have none at Elmwood. I am Mrs. Armytage," she added, as Ruby bent a confused, wondering look upon her, "but of course you know." And she timidly extended one little gloved hand over the fence.

For a moment Ruby Gordon's proud spirit rebelled. She felt that she could not clasp that hand—the hand that had been clasped within her lover's when the words were spoken that had placed the awful barrier between them.

But this girl had meant no wrong. She also had been made to suffer; perhaps her sufferings were as great as her own. And as Ruby gazed at the sweet, innocent-looking face and met the wistful look of the clear, blue eyes, her forgiving nature triumphed; and without further hesitation she clasped hands with the wife of Lawrence Armytage, the woman who had, though unintentionally, robbed her life of all joy.

As they stood thus, looking into each other's eyes and realizing, as they did, how natural it would be for them to hate each other, each felt how noble it would be to bury all feelings of envy and jealousy and be friends. And when Bessie, with a wildly beating heart and eyes that had grown misty with tears, expressed a wish that they might do this, Ruby's heart was completely won.

It was a strange picture which these two made as they seated themselves upon a garden seat and talked over the trouble that lay so near each heart. For they did this; and when at last Bessie Armytage went slowly homeward, she bore within her hand a magnificent bunch of the fragrant violets which Ruby had given her as a pledge of their eternal friendship.

But her heart was now torn with conflicting emotions. She had promised to be a friend to Ruby Gordon, and she meant to be one; but deep down within her heart there still rankled the thought that this girl stood in the way of her ever winning her husband's love, and she knew, even now, that if Ruby should die, she could feel no sorrow. Ah! would she not be actually glad if this might happen? She knew she would. This was very wicked, but it was very like human nature, and there was nothing of the angel about this passionate little creature with whom Fate had dealt so harshly, although Ruby had called her one when she had tearfully pleaded for her friendship.

Ruby had promised to attend the ball, and after dinner, as Lawrence joined her in the flower-scented old garden where she usually spent the twilight hours, she told him of what she had done.

For a moment he looked at her in astonishment too deep for words.

"Bessie, you have actually done this—friends with Ruby?" he asked, as he paused in his walk beside her and looked down into her face; and his voice had in it a ring of gladness as he continued: "Nothing would please me better than to have you two become friends; but it is something I never dreamed of—never dared to hope for."

"Then you are not displeased with me, Lawrence, for having done this? I feared you might be."

"No, dear, I surely am not displeased with you; on the contrary, I feel that there is something truly noble and unselfish about you," and to her amazement he bent and kissed her tenderly.

How that kiss thrilled her very soul! But the next instant a bitter thought arose and took away its sweetness. He had done this because of the intense joy which the thought had given him that Ruby Gordon would once again be a guest within his home—that once again he was to see her dear face and hear her well beloved voice.

She stifled the sigh that arose to her lips; but when Lawrence, as they were about to resume their walk, drew her arm within his—something he had never done before—she shuddered. She had won a little tenderness at last, but only by being kind to Ruby Gordon.

Her heart was so heavy with pain at this moment that it was with difficulty that she restrained herself from crying out with the awful misery of it all. She would have to be truly noble and unselfish, indeed, if she continued to be friendly with this girl through life. Could she do it, she wondered. Could she!

Perhaps Lawrence understood something of the thoughts that were passing within her mind; for after a silence of several moments had fallen between them, he said, in a voice that rang with sadness now:

"You are a dear, sweet little woman, Bessie, and you deserve a better fate than has befallen you."

CHAPTER VI.

On the night of the ball, Elmwood was a blaze of light. The grand old entrance hall was lined with rare plants and flowers, among which shone lights of all colors. The whole suite of rooms had been thrown open, and, standing at the entrance, one seemed to look down an endless vista of flowers and lights.

And amid this costly splendor, the lonely woman, who was mistress of it all, stood, clad in robes of magnificence, and with an air of defiance about her that seemed to become her well, for she was truly beautiful and fascinating tonight.

Her sister stood by her side, for she had arrived the day before, and as she gazed at the costly and beautiful decorations she almost fancied herself in fairyland.

"How intensely happy Bessie must be!" she thought, for she knew nothing of the true state of affairs. And drawing nearer to her sister's side she said, in a laughing way: "I expect to meet my ideal tonight, and I hope he will be able to give me just such a glorious old home as you have gained."

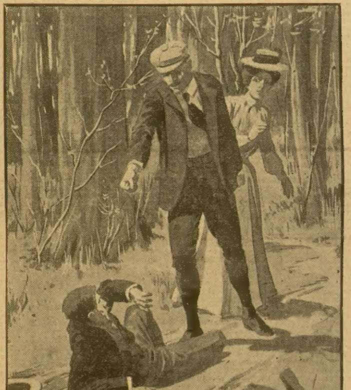
Bessie sighed.

"Wealth and position are not everything, Addie. If you meet your ideal, make sure that he has a heart to give you as well as a home."

Addie Vincent wondered greatly at her sister's words, but their full meaning did not come to her until long after. Her own jesting words also came back to her in after days, bringing to her heart a feeling of passionate pain. She met her ideal, but oh, such worthless clay!

The carriages had begun to arrive now, and, standing by her husband's side, Bessie received her guests in a manner that betrayed nothing of the pent-up agony of her heart. She had set herself the task of playing a great part in the drama of life tonight, and she had resolved to do it well.

From curiosity the guests came early. All were anxious to be present at the opening of the ball. Bessie knew well that inquisitive eyes were constantly fixed upon her face, that every one was wondering how she would receive her rival, and that the least shadow of pain that might come to her face would be at once noted and commented upon. No one should have that triumph over her; her face should wear no shadows.



"You scoundrel!"

She played her part to perfection. When Ruby Gordon arrived, her lips were wreathed in smiles and her eyes were bright with seeming delight as she, in her charming, gracious way, received her.

There was some little sensation in the room while this act was being played. No one could help admiring the sweet, cordial way in which she welcomed her rival; and some of them at once voted her an angel, while others said that she did not care—that she had married Lawrence for the wealth which he would one day inherit, and that she cared not that his heart had been given to another.

Ruby Gordon had long been the acknowledged belle of every social gathering, but tonight public admiration was divided between these two whose paths in life had crossed so fatally; for it was impossible to tell which was the most beautiful—the dark-eyed Ruby in a simple evening dress of black organdie over some crimson material, or the fair-haired bride in white silk and costly jewels. No one knew which to admire the more.

But while Bessie managed to hide her unhappiness, Ruby did not; indeed, she did not try to. Every one knew that she and Lawrence had loved each other, that they had been engaged; why should she wish the world to believe that their love had been so weak that the barrier which an act of treachery and folly had placed between them had killed it—that it no longer existed? There was no reason why she should wish to dissemble, and if there had been, she could not have done it well, she was too truthful by nature.

She made no exhibition of her feelings, but her lips wore no forced smiles, and there was an air of sadness about her that was apparent to all.

Only once did she dance with Lawrence. He asked her for the first waltz, and although she debated within her mind whether it would give her pain or pleasure, she did not refuse.

After the waltz was over she passed through the ballroom and into the conservatory beyond. She wanted to be alone. She felt that she could not dance again tonight; that she could not endure the touch of another's arm now that his had once again been clasped around her.

But she was not to be left alone. A hand was presently laid upon her shoulder and a familiar voice sounded in her ear, and on looking up she met the gaze of Leslie Darrell's false but handsome face as it bent above her.

"You here!" she exclaimed. "I wonder that you dared to come! I—how—who——"

"Who invited me, you would like to know," he said, smiling at her confusion.

"That is just what I would like to know. It was a crazy thing to do, whoever did it, considering the circumstances. Old Mr. Armytage invited you, of course; he is half crazy."

"Well, you see it is this way. I did the old fellow a good turn"—and a slow, mocking smile overspread his face—"and, naturally, he appreciates it very much. As for Lawrence—well, you see I am related to the old man, and if the young dog does not comply with the old man's wishes in everything, at least in all important things, he will be disinherited and I will step into his shoes. Understand?"

"I understand that you are a miserable coward. Go back to the ballroom and leave me alone!"

"Then you call it cowardly to try to win that which one desires very much?"

"Win? Did you ever know one to win anything by a cowardly act, least of all a woman's heart? But what are you doing?" And rising to her feet she snatched from his hand her card which he had taken and on which he had begun to write his name. "I will not dance with you, Leslie Darrell, and you know it!"

"Why not, pray?"

"Because I hate you! Leave me at once—go!"

Lawrence Armytage chanced to enter the conservatory at this moment, and on hearing Ruby's last words he stepped between them. "Yes, go," he repeated, "before I throw your worthless form through the window. My deluded old father's mistaken sense of hospitality has made it possible for you to be here, but that does not mean that I must stand calmly by and see you insult my guests with your odious attentions, and especially the girl whom——"

"You love," Leslie interrupted, with a mocking laugh. "I suppose that if it was your wife with whom I wanted to dance you would offer no objections."

Lawrence did not reply to this, but turning to Ruby he said:

"If that miserable hound ever annoys you again, I will kill him!"

Leslie had turned to leave them, but these words fell distinctly on his ears; and he registered within his mind a vow that he would yet be revenged on Lawrence Armytage for the humiliation he had twice suffered at his hands in the presence of Ruby Gordon. And he at once began to lay his plans which were successfully carried out in after years.

Ruby was trembling nervously, and as Lawrence placed for her a chair she seated herself within it and raised her hands to her brow with a weary gesture. Presently with a sudden uplifting of her eyes she said:

"Your wife, Lawrence! It is just possible that he will seek to dance with her. You ought not to allow him that privilege. Go! Prevent it if you can."

Lawrence started guiltily. "I had forgotten her," he said, and there was a tone of self-reproach in his voice that, although it wrung Ruby's heart with an odd sense of pain, made her love him the better for it. He should not neglect his wife to look after her; he must not.

Lawrence reached the ballroom just in time to see Darrell bowing to his wife, and, divining at once that he was asking her for the pleasure of a dance, he advanced rapidly to her side, and without seeming to see Darrell at all, he calmly drew her hand within his arm and led her away, saying as he did so:

"Bessie, this is our dance, I believe."

Bessie raised her eyes to his face with a wondering look.

"I think you are mistaken, Lawrence; indeed, I think I am engaged for this dance to Mr. Van Alstyne: Yes; here he comes. You came near losing your partner," she said, as Van Alstyne joined them. "Lawrence was just leading me to the floor in spite of myself."

Lawrence laughed.

"I think that I shall, even now, ask you to excuse her, Van Alstyne, as I particularly desire that she should give this dance to me."

Bessie was delighted. Aside from the pleasure that it gave her to dance with Lawrence, it pleased her that his evident great desire that she should dance this particular dance with him was witnessed by others.

"You may have the next dance, Mr. Van Alstyne," she said sweetly, "if you excuse me from this." Then, as Van Alstyne consented, they joined the dancers. And as Lawrence bent his head and gazed into the sweet face so near his own, he was struck by the expression of intense happiness that shone from her eyes. He led her to a seat after the dance was over, and the expression of love and joy deepened until she was divinely beautiful, as, bending above her, he said, in an earnest, entreating way: "Do not dance with Leslie Darrell, little wife. I dislike him very much."

Leslie Darrell stood quite still after Lawrence had taken possession of his wife and had led her from his presence; while the evil look on his handsome face gradually deepened until he looked almost hideous. He ground his teeth in silent rage and to himself renewed his vows of vengeance.

"Of what are you thinking, Mr. Darrell? You look as savage as a bear."

These words, uttered in a light, gay voice, broke in upon his musings, and, turning, he encountered the laughing eyes of Maud Sylvester fixed upon him.

"I feel like a bear!" he answered, a little suddenly. Then, forcing a smile to the lips that had been drawn with anger and rage but a moment before, and changing his tone to one of playfulness, he added: "Just like hugging some one. Who is the pretty girl in blue who has just been dancing with Van Alstyne?"

Maud laughed.

"She it is whom you would like to hug, I suppose. She is Mrs. Armytage's sister, Miss Vincent, from Indiana. Shall I present you?"

"Certainly," and immediately Leslie Darrell's countenance underwent a change. He would, for the evening, monopolize this girl's society if he could; he would show Ruby Gordon that he could win bright smiles from lips as fair as hers if he chose to do so. As for Lawrence, he would scarcely dare to interfere with him here; he could not very well prejudice the mind of this beautiful sister-in-law against him without giving her some reason for his dislike, and he would never do that. He should triumph over Lawrence in this. Besides, if he could win the respect and the liking of the girl, it would make it easier for him to carry out the plans which he had laid for future vengeance.

Thus it was that Addie Vincent met her fate. Leslie Darrell was an exceedingly handsome man and he could make himself very agreeable when he chose to do so. And this sweet, unsuspecting girl, knowing nothing of his true character, gave herself up to the enjoyment of his society and before the evening was over, her heart had passed forever into the keeping of an unprincipled man.

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UNION LABEL

ALLIED PRINTING TRADES UNION LABEL COUNCIL CHICAGO, ILL. 238

After looking upon the wine when it is red many a bookkeeper loses his balance.

Even when a woman knows her husband is lying she keeps right on asking questions.

It appears that the Turks could not refrain from having their regular spring massacre.

It is in accord with the eternal fitness of things that ghosts should walk in the dead of night.

It's only when a piece of property is offered for a song that a man discovers he can't sing.

If you trace your genealogical tree back far enough you may discover monkeys in the branches.

It is a woman's fondness for change that prevents many a husband from leaving any in his pocket.

It appears to depend on who gets first to the gates whether a labor difficulty is a strike or a lockout.

A woman's idea of economy is to trade some old thing she needs for some new thing that she has no use for.

From present indications the institution known as "the Federal crowd" will yet become an issue in national politics.

Japan's custom of advising unsuccessful officers to commit suicide at least obviates a good deal of unwise hero worship.

A man who parts his hair in the middle is apt to hide under a bed while his wife goes downstairs to interview burglars.

Speaking of dreamers, are not those persons who think Grover Cleveland can be nominated past masters in that art?

District Attorney Folk of St. Louis should brace himself, for presidential lightning is wandering around looking for a good Democrat.

Will the Vladivostok fleet begin advertising summer excursions with a guaranty to show passengers a Japanese transport in the difficult and spectacular act of sinking or the money refunded?

Russian soldiers who carelessly strolled up and peeped over the breastworks declare it is a mistake to think that the Japanese are small, since they are, on the contrary, the tallest people on earth.

Aguinaldo is coming to this country. Now if the managers of the St. Louis Pike enterprises will open negotiations with General Funston they can secure a thrilling historical exhibition that will be worth while.

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FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

BY CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER IX.

"Love once, love forever."

It was so warm in Vambrace's rooms that he and Mr. Churchton had adjourned to the veranda opening from them, and sat there smoking and finishing a bottle of champagne without entering upon the subject which lay nearest their hearts. In the distance the thousand lights in the harbor twinkled and danced, like a glorious constellation lowered to cheer and encourage humanity. As he looked at them Vambrace thought how like everything else in life they were: dazzling to the sight, and yet many of them but marking the situation of the death-dealing men-of-war.

The breeze of the Orient was wafted over them; the sickly, enervating air which sapped their strength and changed them from men of action to languid beings whose only aim in life appeared to be that of making the dragging moments pass more rapidly.

Finally Vambrace said in a low tone, his voice trembling in spite of himself:

Mr. Churchton, I asked you to call upon me because I wished to have some confidential conversation with you."

"So I presumed."

"Probably you can make a venture as to the subject," Vambrace said nervously.

Mr. Churchton leaned back in his chair and lighted another cigar.

"I might, but I think I will allow you to tell me so that I will make no mistake." There was a twinkle in his eyes, although Vambrace did not see it.

"You are right, you are right," the Englishman returned, rising and pacing back and forth.

"Yes, I am waiting to hear it," the elder gentleman continued, puffing away at his cigar.

Squaring his shoulders as though preparing to meet an enemy, Vambrace turned suddenly and confronted his guest, saying in a low, tense voice:

"I love your niece, Mr. Churchton, and want your permission to tell her so."

To the hearty, genial gentleman who had been bred in the freer atmosphere of the newer world, this ceremony appeared a little formal. He well knew that he would never have asked for permission to declare his love, but then he remembered that Vambrace was acting entirely in accordance with the custom of his country, and that but a short time before he had been assailed to defend his honor, so he replied pleasantly:

"We are all Americans, and in our country, you know, we believe any girl is capable of deciding that matter for herself. Of course, we may interfere with her marrying a fellow, but we do not prevent his telling her that he loves her."

Vambrace smiled nervously.

"But you see I want to marry her; will you interfere there?"

A firm, steady hand clasped that of the younger man, and a kind voice said:

"Come, sit down, boy. Of course I will not interfere if she loves you, and I rather think she does."

"You really do?"

"Yes, I do, bless her dear little heart."

"This is very kind of you, especially when there is a scandal relative to me floating about."

"Vambrace"—now the kind voice was stern and firm—"I believed you when you said you had never wronged a woman, and from what I have seen I know you are a gentleman and one who would treat my niece properly. She is a girl who will shine in any society, and I think you may well be pleased with her, for she has been carefully educated and is a thoroughbred to the backbone."

"I know that—all of it," cried the delighted lover. "But let me tell you of my financial condition," and Mr. Churchton listened, although once more he was astonished.

"I am a second and younger son. There are only two of us, Bob—dear old boy!—and me. Bob, of course, will come into the title and property if my uncle does not marry, which is not at all likely. I had my mother's settlements, which brought me in a thousand a year."

"Excuse me," Mr. Churchton broke in, "that is five thousand dollars, I suppose?"

"Exactly, all invested in three per-cents. When I was just twenty-one my mother's uncle, a queer old chap, died without issue and left me beastly rich. I think my annual income is something like fifty thousand a year."

"Dollars or pounds?"

"Why, fifty thousand pounds—two hundred and fifty thousand dollars or thereabouts, I suppose. This is income alone, and does not include a beautiful country estate in Cornwall and a real mansion in Belgravia. Of course this has made a rich man of me. Poor Bob was left far behind."

"I know he is not suffering," Mr. Churchton said quietly.

"No, he is not, and never will be while I can get him to take anything, but half the time he refuses," and the young man sighed deeply.

"Then he is proud?"

"Not exactly that. I tell you, I think you ought to know poor Bob's story. It's sad enough, God knows, and I dread to mention it. Still, it will make you understand that my children, if I have any, will likely come into the title, for I am afraid he will never marry."

Mr. Churchton looked still more interested. Thorough American as he was, he could not resist the attraction of a title, and the thought that his grand-nephew would at one time be an earl of the great English nation was intoxicating, to say the least.

Vambrace continued:

"Bob always has been delicate, taking after my father's side of the house. The Vambrace family is frightfully old. We really do trace back to the Conqueror, and the stock is somewhat depleted. Until my father's time the male members married into their own rank in life, choosing as wives delicate girls from other wornout families, until there was nothing to draw upon. My father, who was a younger son, and poor as things go in my country, married a woman pure as an angel, but from the middle class. Poor darling mother! She paid dearly for her elevation. Her people forced her to marry my father, and there being but little love lost between them—although she was a good woman and tried to make him happy—she was miserable enough. Bob took nothing from her but his looks, otherwise he is Vambrace clear through. When I was born she died. It seemed as though all her energy, strength and clean, honest blood was poured into me, but I look like my father's family."

As he looked at the handsome young face, Mr. Churchton thought that one would have to go far to find any better specimen of England's noble sons.

"Bob was always delicate, and so, though he was two years older than I, we were together in our studies. Father made him the same allowance as I had, and yet he could not keep out of debt, although he never appeared to gain anything from his money."

Vambrace sighed deeply as he looked out over the harbor, but presently resumed:

"Then came my inheritance. I was doing fairly well at college, but Bob was so unhappy there that I induced him to go abroad and try and build up. I have never forgiven myself for not accompanying him, but I didn't, and therein lies the story of a wrecked life. Let's have another bottle of champagne," ringing for a waiter and giving his order with that quiet ease which sat so well upon the young man.

When he had swallowed a glass or two Vambrace resumed:

"About a year went by—— I am not boring you?"

"Of course not; keep right on, my boy," was the hearty answer.

"I was plugging away, for I took an interest in my studies and the blood of my more plebeian ancestors being in my veins, I wanted to show that I was something more than a wealthy man, when one day I received a letter from Bob which made me uneasy.

"It did not sound like him. Of course, the boy had had some little adventures, but nothing serious, but here he wrote me about loving to distraction a woman, assuring me, however, that he understood his duty to his family too well to marry her.

"I ought to have gone to him right then, but I was anxious to come out ahead of my class and finish off my career at college. I was then about twenty-four, and so delayed until July. His last letter had been dated from Rome, but I felt sure that he would be in the hills."

"Why?"

"Rome is a furnace during the summer, and very dangerous on account of the Roman fever. Imagine my astonishment when I found he had been living for the past six months in an old palace in the city itself, and that as far as was known he was still there with his companion."

"Did you suspect that?"

"No, I can't say I did, and I resolved I would buy her off if it took every cent of my fortune. But when I reached that mighty palace, where his love and tenderness had surrounded her with everything her heart could wish, I found the bird had flown, and not alone, while my poor brother was lying at death's door, utterly deserted. There was not a single human being there but the tempest-tossed, fever-burned man, who rolled back and forth on his bed, moaning and sobbing for her."

"Where was the woman?"

"She had run away from him, as soon as she found he was ill, with an intimate friend of his," came through clenched teeth.

"Well, of all things!" cried Mr. Churchton indignantly.

"It was six months before Poor Bob was able to get around, and he will never marry. First, on account of his poor health, and again, because of her. He realizes her utter worthlessness, but with him it is 'love once, love forever,' and I believe it is that way with me, too."

"Where is she now?"

"I do not know. Three or four years later I was introduced to a lady who claimed to have come from Australia, and, with plenty of money and unimpeachable credentials, backed by some of the leaders of society, had effected an entrance into the highest set. One glance was enough for me. The following day she disappeared, and as far as I know she has never tried to get into decent society again, at least not English society."

"Why, how did you know her?"

"Her pictures were everywhere in the castle, especially life-size oil. Did I tell you Bob was an artist? They showed me a woman rarely lovely, with midnight hair, clear skin and great blue eyes. She was slim, but exquisitely shaped, and there was a something which he managed to catch in his pictures which I would recognize anywhere. I threatened her with instant exposure, and she had the good sense to throw up the sponge. I made an enemy then, however," and Vambrace laughed carelessly, not recognizing that even the most insignificant enemy may at some time work direful results.

"What was her name?" Mr. Churchton asked just as carelessly, and Vambrace replied:

"Villa Yeamons was what she called herself to my brother. This is a story I hate to recall, and I hope you will understand," this last wistfully.

"Of course I will, of course, and the story does you credit, too, my boy—great credit," and Mr. Churchton smiled in his whole-souled way, being delighted with the confidence reposed in him.

"And now, to return to the subject in hand. You see, Mr. Churchton, what I can offer my darling. I can give her every luxury, and a title for her eldest son," Vambrace said quietly, and yet with a certain pride that there was so much he could offer.

Mr. Churchton straightened up as he replied with a pride of his own:

"All right, my boy; and now as the guardian of my darling, I am glad to tell you that she will bring you five million dollars, so invested that it yields about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars annually, just your income. To offset your houses, she will inherit at my death a quarter of my own property, and at the last showing just before we came abroad, when I made my will and set my affairs in order, it was estimated at about twenty millions," and Mr. Churchton beamed.

Vambrace looked astonished, but said quietly:

"You know I would take her without a single cent. In fact, I wish she had nothing—my pure, precious Lilly."

"What?" Mr. Churchton said, sharply.

"Why, what?" Vambrace asked in turn, a little astonished.

"Nothing, nothing, of course. You have asked my permission to marry Lilly?"

"And you have given it."

"Of course—certainly. Well, my boy, I wish you luck," and he shook hands in a hasty, abrupt manner, and left Vambrace's rooms looking worried, while the latter wondered to himself, then forgot in the happy dreams of an unclouded future.

Mr. Churchton almost felt his way to his own apartments, and when he reached them he fell into a chair, muttering to himself:

"His Lilly, his Lilly! Bless my soul, what have I done? Vincent adores Lilly, and it is Rose who loves Vambrace." Then his thoughts took another turn, and he grew very pale.

"Rose loves him, I know; but what if Lilly does, too? Twin sisters, and rivals! It will break both their hearts, precious girls. Poor, poor Vin, too—was there ever such a pickle? I wish we were away from this land where Americans are laughed at and our young people fall in love with Englishmen," and with these thoughts in his brain the kind-hearted gentleman fell into a troubled slumber.

CHAPTER X.

"The day that wears my diadem of hope
When I shall know love's plentitude and
scope."

The wooing of a lover is romantic when he is a man of the world, thoroughly versed in all the little tendernesses which make of every word a caress, but especially is this true when the surroundings are Oriental and the very air itself seems throbbing with the great song of Nature.

The entire party had been out in a steam launch and landed on one of the many beautiful islands for tea. That repast, which is so important a one where there are any English, was over, and while the others roamed about gathering shells and flowers, Vambrace drew Lillian aside, and, seating her comfortably on a mossy boulder, threw himself at her feet with a gracefulness scarcely to be expected in a man of his height. The girl flushed slightly with the dark, ardent eyes searching her face, but said lightly, for American girls are adept at sparring:

"Surely this must be the original seat of the Garden of Eden."

"Is it so lovely to your eyes?" Vambrace asked softly, his rich voice surcharged with his love.

"Beyond any words. I try to write home descriptions of the glorious sunsets; the coloring; the strange scenes; the flowers; fruit, and you will laugh, but the delightful chow!" this last with a little laugh intended to break the tenseness of the moment which she felt but could not exactly explain.

"Is there nothing else in all this loveliness for you?" Vambrace asked softly, drawing himself to a position where he could look straight into her eyes.

"Of course, many things," but I am stupid about expressing myself. Rosie writes sheets on sheets and never exhausts herself, but I just feel."

"What do you feel?"

The girlish lips began to quiver under that glance and the mellow voice, but Lilly was brave, so she continued, although she scarcely knew what she was saying:

"As though there could not be a more beautiful place on the face of the earth," and her eyes grew dreamy.

"I, too, feel that. I, too, know that this place has been made into a veritable paradise for me this trip, but I know what has changed that which has been hitherto a rather commonplace English station into the abiding place of a heavenly being, and I also know that no matter where my paradise be located, if that being is there also it will be the same."

The soft eyes were drooped and he could not look into their depths, but he could see the tiny fingers trembling as they tore to pieces a great crimson rose.

"Can you understand me?" How low and sweet the voice!

"Lilly, dearest one, do you realize that you have made me your captive, body and soul? Tell me, tell me," and the man leaned forward, a world of entreaty in his eyes, his voice tearing her heart strings.

Lilly raised her own eyes to meet the ardent gaze which spelled devotion, reverence and wildest passion, held in absolute check, and the great tears gathered.

"Lilly, my pure, delicate flower!" Vambrace cried, holding out his finely-shaped hands to her.

"No, no!" the girl cried, shrinking back, her face flushing crimson.

"But I love you, and I am hoping with every breath I draw that you love me. Not as I do you, but that you can give me a little love."

Down dropped the flowerlike face into the tiny hands, and a great sob wrecked her slight figure. This was too much for Vambrace to endure, and he gathered her to his heart, holding the graceful girl in his arms and touching the golden hair with his lips.

For one delicious moment she lay thus, as she longed madly to ever lie, then she struggled, and his arms dropped away from her. With the saddest expression he had ever seen upon a human face, Lillian looked at him and replied gently:

"Forgive me, but I dare not return your love."

"Why?" The question was asked simply, and yet as from one having authority.

"Please do not ask me for my reasons," was the quiet answer.

The young man's face flushed a deep crimson, and then he grew white as death.

"And yet your uncle believes in me," he said humbly.

It was Lillian's turn to blush, and the tears filled her eyes once more as she turned and impulsively held out her hands.

"How could you wrong me so! You ought to know that it is not for any such reason."

"What is it, darling, what is it? Tell me. At least I ought to know what it is that strikes every hope out of my life. Surely I have that much right to your consideration."

"I cannot, cannot tell you," Lillian sobbed.

Vambrace rose and began pacing back and forth, as he usually did when perplexed or disturbed.

Each sob which came from Lillian's heart seemed to turn the knife in the wound, and at last he addressed her once more, half-kneeling beside her, his eyes with a hunted, wistful expression in them, searching her face.

"Lilly, darling, I have hoped and hoped for your love. It is something I long for more than anything this world or the next can hold for me. Mine is not a boy's love. Tell me, sweetheart, are you afraid that I will not prove steadfast?"

"No, no," came back in quick, jerky sobs.

"Is it because of my age? I am thirty-five, my child—nearly double your age."

"That isn't it."

"You believe that I love you, dear one—truly, purely and earnestly?"

"Of course I do," holding out a little hand which he covered with burning kisses and retained.

"See here, dear, is it because you feel that you are bound to your cousin?"

"My cousin?"

"Yes, Mr. Lyndstock."

"Oh, no, poor Vin, of course not," and a watery smile came upon her face. "He is a dear, good boy, but I have always thought of him as my brother. I could not love him."

"Could you love me?" Once more the strong arms stole about her and she was drawn toward the manly breast.

"I could love you very dearly," she returned promptly. "No, please do not touch me. I could love, but I dare not."

"Lilly," Vambrace cried triumphantly, "you do love me, and I will have you, no matter what intervenes. See, I claim you for my own," and before she could resist he pressed his lips to hers. For a moment, delicious, intoxicating, Lilly forgot everything. She no longer remembered the seventeen years she and Rose had loved each other and been everything to one another. The years when they had borne the same childish troubles were blotted from her mind in the mad union of lips; when soul seemed to call soul, and her highest duty appeared to be her love for the man she recognized was the one in all the universe. Then she tore herself away. Her eyes had fallen upon the crimson petals of the rose she had been pulling to pieces.

"Oh, what have you done!" she cried excitedly.

"Simply shown you my heart and obtained a peep into yours," he cried rapturously, but the joy died out of his face as the girl said, with such deep anguish in her voice that he scarcely recognized it:

"There is a reason, Mr. Vambrace, for my not loving you, and I fear it will always stand between us. This much I can tell you now. If it is ever removed, I will tell you myself. If it remains, I will never love any one else."

"Then you do love me?" he asked eagerly.

"So much that there is no physical torture which would so tear and rend me as my having to give you up," and she lifted a strangely altered face to his—one he did not dare to touch.

"I shall never give you up!" he cried wrathfully.

Lilly only shook her head sadly.

"Do you think a man's heart is a flower like that"—pointing to the destroyed rose—"that your fingers can pull to pieces and then trample upon?"

Lilly went a step nearer to him. "Why are you unjust to me? Do you not see that it is horrible to thrust your love aside, and that if my reason was not stronger than death itself I would never do it? Please give me that much credit," and she looked at the man with an expression he could not mistake. With a face drawn and worn, Vambrace bent reverently over her little hand and asked anxiously, as he touched it softly with his lips:

"If you can remove that reason, you will let me know?"

"Indeed, I will. I am not anxious to ruin our lives," Lilly responded, and then showed perhaps more clearly than ever before the effect of her careful training as she said in a lower voice:

"Be careful, I hear the others coming back. Let us walk down to the launch," to which he returned:

"My brave girl," but controlled himself so that there was but little trace of the struggle the two had been passing through when they were joined by the others, Alex saying in a voice which would have won him distinction as a quarter-back:

"Where is everybody? Gosh! but I'm dying for chow. Come on, so we can get back chop chop, and fill up," and laughing heartily at Rose's reproof:

"If you keep on at this perfectly awful rate there'll have to be double runners to your chairs and two men to push behind in your jinrikisha," to which Alex commenced a spirited reply, but was taken down quietly by Vincent, who asked:

"And what did the scales tip today?"

CHAPTER XI.

"O Radiant Angel of my ruling star!
Read me the story of the horoscope
That sent Love to me."

The twin sisters were in their rooms, in their kimonos, and their amahs had been dismissed. Over Rose's pink silk robe fell her cloud of black hair; while the pale blue one of Lillian was covered with a shower of gold. Both girls were brushing their hair and talking, as was their custom, although both looked weary. Lillian's eyes were heavy and smarted with the tears she had shed, while Rose's ached with those she had not given way to, and yet neither dared to tell the other of the fever which raged in each gentle breast.

At last Rose said:

"What makes uncle keep talking about war, and saying we had better go home?"

"Does he intend to leave Hongkong?" Lilly asked, her lips trembling. Go away from this paradise, and her only hope of seeing the man she so utterly adored!

"We can't stay here during the summer." This dreadful air grows worse and worse," and Rose sighed fretfully and began to gather her hair into a great braid.

"Don't you love the place?" Lillian asked in astonishment.

"No, I am too much of an American to care for foreign customs. Of course, it is nice to be waited upon, but I prefer our servants at home to these servile ones."

"They have no reason to be servile to us," Lillian remonstrated.

"No, but we are a very small proportion of people who have Chinese servants. When my amah told me today that I was the only woman she had ever worked for who did not bang her about with a hairbrush or cane I felt real boiling mad," and there was a dangerous flash in the dark eyes.

Lilly sighed wearily. When one has renounced the love of a lifetime, the woes of servants do not appeal very strongly, and Lilly never did interfere with existing conditions, believing, as she had told Vincent, that the God who made the people could look after them.

"My amah does not talk much," she said, as she, too, braided har hair.

"She is rather queer," Rose suggested.

"Of course she is, dearie, but you think every one is an angel," and Rose crossed the room to her sister's side and looked down lovingly at the fair young girl.

Lillian raised her eyes, and the two sisters looked straight at each other for a moment, before Rose asked gently:

"What is it, Lilly?"

The fair face flamed a vivid scarlet.

"I do not understand you," she faltered.

"What is it that makes my sister so unhappy?"

Again Lillian flushed, and her hands caught up a flower from a vase and began to strew it about the floor, before she said, nervously:

"Nothing; I am tired, and, then, I hate to leave here."

Rose paused a moment to gather strength, then she said softly:

"You can come back."

"No, uncle does not care much for this paradise." How her voice caressed the word!

"But, darling, some one else will bring you."

Lillian sprang to her feet, the rose petals falling in a crimson stream to the floor. Once more had she shed the heart blood of a red rose.

"I do not understand you."

The tender arms of the sister entwined her, and Rose's soft contralto said gently:

"We have all seen, sweet one, that you are loved and that you love in turn."

Lilly pushed aside the loving arms, and, turning to the window, said in a stifled voice:

"You are mistaken. I know that my Rose has given her heart away," and, pulling aside the curtains, she looked out into the night.

For a moment the room was so still that both girls could hear their hearts beat, then Lilly stifled a cry by putting one little hand over her rosy mouth as she remembered that afternoon and the deep, tender voice whispering his love. She recalled the deep, delicious moment when soul had called soul; when she had recognized that theirs would be a match made in Heaven.

As Lillian's thoughts were running riot, Rose was suffering as few girls are called upon to endure, for a sudden light had dawned upon her, and she knew that her sister had discovered her secret love and was trying to kill her own in loyalty to the sisterly love. Oh, for something to change her ideas! and poor Rosie's heart went up in an anxious prayer for help. The answer came, and although she shrank back from accepting it for an instant, she then went on to her fate. If one sister could put a glowing, reciprocated love aside for love of her, she, Rose, would not falter in rendering that sacrifice unnecessary, so she said, softly:

"Lilly, darling, do you think that there is any hope for me?"

Lillian turned, with every vestige of color gone from her fair face, and looked down, for Rose had fallen to her knees, which were really too weak to support her trembling body, and was gazing upward with such an expression of entreaty that the former was frightened.

"Rose, sister, what is it?" Lilly cried, trying to raise her, but Rose still knelt and hid her face, as white as Lillian's own, in the soft azure folds of the sweeping gown, and whispered:

"I do love him so much!"

Lillian dropped back into her chair, being herself too weak to stand. Her worst fears were confirmed. Still, if her Rose wanted anything of hers, even to the heart of the man she adored, she should have it, for one of them should be happy.

"I did not think you would guess," Rose continued, still hiding her face, but clinging to her sister's cold little hand.

"Yes, I saw it, darling," was the gentle answer.

"When?"

"Some time ago," Lilly gasped. "I can scarcely say just when."

Having gained a better control over herself, Rose now raised her face and said with some of her natural archness:

"It must have been a good while ago, for I believe I have loved him ever since I first saw him."

"I am not surprised," Lilly's answer came very slowly, and yet Rose did not hurry for fear of arousing her suspicions.

"Still, he wasn't especially lovable when I first saw him," and Rose forced quite a merry little laugh from her white lips.

"Not very lovable? Oh, Rosie! Why, don't you remember how noble he looked as he stood on deck there bowing when uncle introduced us and——"

With a laugh, which had more sadness in it than joy, had Lillian been very critical, Rose sprang to her feet and, looking down, asked gaily:

"Whom are you talking about, you dear dummy? The first time I saw the man I am talking about he was a poor, sad-looking boy, clad in mourning."

"Rose, do not trifle with me. Who do you mean?"

The young head drooped like a flower on the stem under a noonday sun. Of a verity she was passing through a scorching experience, and she said quietly, although her lips trembled so that the words would scarcely form:

"Vin, dear Vin, whom I have known for ten years."

With a mad cry of joy Lillian clasped her sister to her heart, laughing and crying alternately:

"Is it true, darling, is it true? Oh, my darling, I am so happy, and I had thought I bade good-by to happiness this afternoon."

Out of breath she paused, and Rose asked in well-affected astonishment:

"Now what do you mean?"

"That I love, too," was the joyous answer.

"Not Vin! I had hoped you did not care for him," Rose said, feeling like a monster, and yet knowing she was assuring her sister happiness, even if it were at the expense of her own.

"No, my sister, not dear Vin, but Mr. Vambrace. There, how will you like him for a brother? Oh, Rosie, I am so happy—so happy! Isn't he the noblest, handsomest and most wonderful man that ever lived? Oh, I am so happy!" and in proof of it Lilly sat down and sobbed as though her heart would break, but the tears were those of happiness.

Brave, loyal little Rose! With every heart string echoing and doubling the praise of Vambrace, she said softly, as soon as Lillian had ceased her sobbing sufficiently for her words to be heard:

"Of course he is very nice, but I am better used to Americans. I know and understand dear Vin so well, but, Lilly, he does not love me," and she turned away toward the window, wishing as she did so that death would release her.

A gentle arm was thrown about her shoulders, and Lilly's voice sounded in her ears:

"He does. The fancy he had for me is dying a natural death. I am not the wife for him. He needs your brightness, sweetness and strength of character. In your dear little hands, Vin may become almost anything on the face of the earth. He is really brilliant, but his talents have to be reflected, darling. Oh, how happy I am!" and again the tears began to flow.

For one moment Rose allowed herself to think of what she herself might have become had Vambrace's fancy fallen upon her, for no woman really longs to become merely a reflection of another's virtues, then she resolutely put that part of her life away and thereafter sternly forbade herself to think of Quinton Vambrace save as a dearly loved brother, the husband of her darling sister.

For more than an hour the two talked, Lilly giving Rose the substance of the conversation of the afternoon, although there were some things too sacred to repeat even to her. When Rose realized how brave Lilly had been, and of the resolve the delicate girl had taken to put the proffered love out of her life, her own tears fell and greatly relieved the overladen heart.

"And you would have gone unloved through life for my sake?" Rose whispered, to which Lilly replied:

"I could never be happy if I knew you loved him, too, and yet it was so terrible to think of him loving me so," and Rose was strengthened in her course of action.

On the balcony outside, during the conversation between the two sisters, had crouched, two figures, but when the women had fallen asleep in each other's arm the taller figure rose and clutched the other, saying sibilantly:

"Come into my room and talk this over with me. We will demand our revenge," to which the other hissed back:

"Show me how to reach his cold heart and I am yours forever and forever."

This charming story of life and love in the far East will be continued in next week's issue of the Ledger. Each person sending in a subscription to this paper is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

◆

LIVELY 70

Right Food Makes Young of the Aged.

When one is lively and a hard worker at this age there is something interesting to tell, and the Princeton lady who has passed this mark explains how her wonderful health is due to the food she eats.

"I am past seventy years of age and up to five years ago suffered terribly with chronic stomach trouble, heart disease, and was generally as weak as you will find sick old women of 65. At that time I began to use Grape-Nuts food and from the very first it began to build me up. Soon I came to a condition of perfect health because I can always digest this food and it is full of nourishment. All my heart and stomach troubles are gone. I soon gained between 15 and 20 pounds and have never lost it. I can now do a hard day's work.

"Certainly this is the greatest food I ever struck. It gave me strength and ambition and courage and I try to do all the good I can telling people what it has done for me. Many of my neighbors use it and are doing fine.

"I had the grip the latter part of the winter and for four weeks ate absolutely nothing but Grape-Nuts and came out of the sickness nicely. That will show you how strong and sturdy I am. Truly it is wonderful food to do such things for one of my age." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Delicious, crisp, nutty flavored Grape-Nuts. Trial 10 days proves things.

Get the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in each package.

◆

Boston Matrons.

Mrs. Jackson—My husband had been drinking when he came home last night, and I gave him a talking to he won't forget in a hurry.

Mrs. Jilson—When my husband comes home in that way I never scold him, but merely suggest that I want a new gown or something. It works both ways. I get the gown and he keeps straight for a long time."

◆

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE HEALING.

ONE MILLION CURED CASES.

You Can Be Cured Whether You Believe in Christian Science or Not.

Over a million cases of disease in every form are now to the credit of Christian Science Healing. Most of these were cases that the doctors had given up as "incurable." Many more were chronic maladies that had baffled their skill for years. All were quickly cured; some were cured instantly. The evidence on these facts is simply indisputable and the curing still goes on. There can be no mistake or misstatement about it. The healers and their work are in public view. As a C. S. healer my many marvelous cures have startled the world. During the past 12 years I have healed diseases of almost every known kind and in every stage of severity. They included many surgical cases where operations were otherwise threatened. I cured cases that were far away from me, as well as those near at hand. And I tell you in like manner that wherever you may dwell, whether one or many physicians have failed to give you relief, if you report the case to me and so desire, you shall be cured. This is no vain or idle promise. My past success fully justifies it. You can be cured whether you believe in Christian Science or not. You can be cured whether in this city or thousands of miles away from me. In our Christian Science Healing distance is of no account; disbelief is not any hindrance; disappointments of the past only make stronger grounds for hope. All you really need is the wish to be healed.

I have just published a little book in regard to this blessed truth called "A Message of Health and Healing." If you write to me I will gladly send you a copy free. It gives many interesting facts and convincing testimonials. Enclose 2-cent stamp for postage. S. A. Jefferson, C. S. B., Suite 604, 112 Dearborn street, Chicago, Ill.

◆

A Scandal.

The guests at the Southern resort are noticeably perturbed.

"They will cast odium upon the hitherto good name of the place," they complain.

"Who will?" we ask.

"That couple at the end of the piazza. It is Mr. and Mrs. Gayleigh, and they are carrying on the most desperate of flirtations, when the judge is still considering their suit for divorce. Oh, why can they not consider our feelings and wait until they are no longer married persons?"

◆

The Rosebud Reservation

lands are open in July. Full particulars as to date of registration, drawings and final entry, and as to character of soil and climate, requirements of the U. S. homestead laws, maps, etc., are contained in a pamphlet "New Homes in the West" issued by the Passenger Department, Chicago & North-Western Ry. Send 2 cent stamp for copy or call on any ticket agent The North-Western Line. W. B. Kniskern, 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ills.

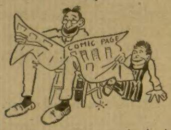
◆

A Woman of Uncertain Age.

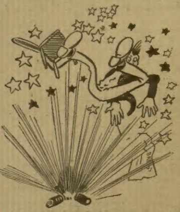
"How old would you say she was?"

"Well, let's see: When we were in high school together she used to snub me because I was a kid. Now I'm thirty-seven, and—um-m-m—well, I should say she was about twenty-eight by this time."

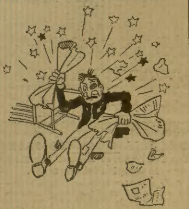
He Flops.



Uncle Saunders—Whaw, ha, ha, ho, ho! This is real screechin' funny—this here comic. A kid puts a (haw, haw!) firecracker under the (ho, ho, ho!) old man an'——



"Murder, fire, dynamite, help, water!



"The donkey on this paper what tried to make a funny picter out o' human sufferin' orter lose his job!"

Making a Long Story.

Husband—You have an exceptionally good dinner tonight, my dear.

Wife—I'm so glad you like it. I got it up expressly to please you.

Husband—Hum! How much shall I make out the check for?

AGENTS WANTED

Establish a Business of your own

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Not one cent is required, nor is experience necessary. We furnish you with a complete outfit and give you exclusive territory. You have no competition in your field.

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DETECTIVES WE WANT BRIGHT young men in every locality to learn this fascinating business, and earn large rewards and big pay. We are being called upon regularly to furnish experienced men for this work. For particulars apply in own hand-writing. Devereux and Sutherland Secret Service Agency, Dept. A, 140 Dearborn St., CHICAGO, ILL

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Sorry He Spoke.

Husband—I'd like to know what enjoyment you find in trotting around from store to store, looking at and pricing things you cannot purchase.

Wife—I know it looks silly, yet there is a sort of melancholy pleasure in knowing I could have bought them had I married Tom Coldcash when I had the chance, instead of throwing myself away on you.

Salesmen Wanted.

Agents, dealers and storekeepers, start in business for yourself on our capital. We make men's fine clothing to measure and you can sell our perfect fitting, highest class tailoring at a good profit for as little money as others retail ready made goods. You can control entire local trade with our line. Fall line 350 up-to-date styles of woolens, fashion displays, etc., now ready and furnished free. A great opportunity. Write today for full particulars and exclusive territory. Experience not absolutely necessary. American Woolen Mills Co., Dept. K, Washington Boulevard & Union St., Chicago.

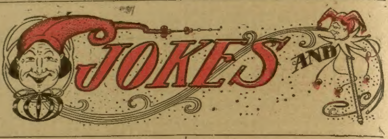
As Explained.

Irate Customer—I though you said that parrot I bought of you last week was an educated bird.

Dealer—So I did, sir.

Irate Customer—But he can't speak a word.

Dealer—Of course not. He was educated in a deaf and dumb asylum.



Who He Was.

Mr. Lightweight (airily, to conductor)—I wonder what that shabby old codger finds so attractive in this direction. He's been eyeing me for ten minutes.

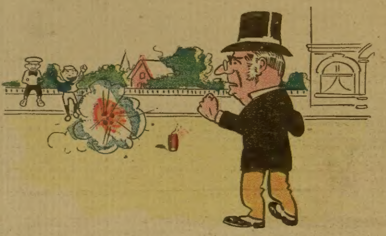
Conductor (thoughtfully)—I guess he's wondering how you happen to be traveling on a pass. He's the president of the road.

False Hopes.

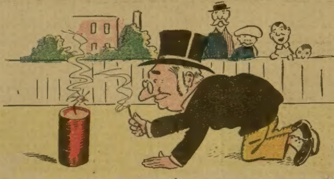
Flannigan—Say, Moike, this won't do. People say you are shwate on Mrs. Flaherty—and she a married woman.

Mike—Phwist! Not a wur-rd. Thot's only so Oi can go on borryin' terbacky av old Flaherty. He's in hopes Oi'll elope wid 'er.

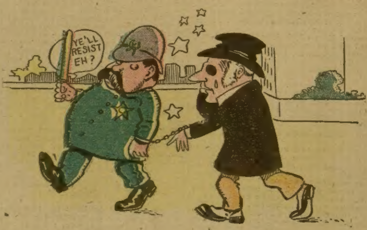
THE TOUCH OF NATURE.



Old Pufkin—It's an outrage the way these infernal boys are allowed to make noises before the Fourth.



"Well, say! They've left a giant cracker. I'll just touch her off for luck."


YE'LL RESIST EH?

"Oh, come, now, officer! It's all a mistake. The other boys did it."

A Short Term Empress.

Binks—Oh, yes, she carries herself like an empress, and bosses me around all she likes now; but wait until we are married, and then see how she'll fawn and cringe.

Winks—To you?

Binks—No; to the servant girl.

Modern Improvement.

Friend—You haf move a new house in, I hear.

Swiebler—Yah; und dot house has all de modern imbrovements—city vater for vashing, und a peer saloon glose by.

Woman's Wisdom.

Sister—If you are so dreadfully in love with her, why don't you propose to her?

Brother—She gives me no encouragement.

Sister—Nonsense! Only yesterday I heard her advise you to let your mustache grow, because shaving it so much would make it it stiff.

To a Poor Singer.

Some say your voice is good. Gee whiz!
There can't be any grounds
For such a thing unless it is
Much better than it sounds!

TWO STEPS

The Last One Helps the First.

A sick coffee drinker must take two steps to be rid of his troubles and get strong and well again.

The first is to cut off coffee absolutely.

That removes the destroying element. The next step is to take liquid food (and that is Postum Food Coffee) that has in it the elements nature requires to change the blood corpuscles from pale pink or white to rich red, and good red blood builds good strong and healthy cells in place of the broken-down cells destroyed by coffee. With well-boiled Postum Food Coffee to shift to, both these steps are easy and pleasant. The experience of a Georgian proves how important both are.

"From 1872 to the year 1900 my wife and I had both been afflicted with sick or nervous headache and at times we suffered untold agony. We were coffee drinkers and did not know how to get away from it, for the habit is hard to quit.

"But in 1900 I read of a case similar to ours where Postum Coffee was used in place of the old coffee and a complete cure resulted, so I concluded to get some and try it.

"The result was, after three days' use of Postum in place of the coffee I never had a symptom of the old trouble and in five months I had gained from 145 pounds to 163 pounds.

"My friends asked me almost daily what wrought the change. My answer always is, leaving off coffee and drinking Postum in its place.

"We have many friends who have been benefited by Postum.

"As to whether or not I have stated the facts truthfully I refer you to the Bank of Carrollton or any business firm in that city where I have lived for many years and am well known." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

"There's a reason."

Look in each package for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Quite Another Thing.

She—Is it true that Swellington married a model?

He—He thought he did.

A HALF MILLION ACRES.

Government Lands Open for Settlement in the Rosebud Indian Reservation in Southeastern South Dakota. The Chicago & North-Western Ry. is the direct line from Chicago to Bonesteel on the reservation border. Send 2 cent stamp for pamphlet "New Homes in the West" containing maps and full information as to the allotment of these fertile lands. W. B. Kniskern, 22 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ills.

A Hard Question.

Philosopher—What is it that you women want.

Mrs. Strongmind—All we want is justice.

Philosopher—Only justice? Then why do you always patronize the photographers who have the best retouchers?

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

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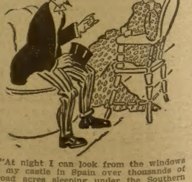
Castilian Dreamer.



"At night I can look from the windows of my castle in Spain over thousands of broad acres sleeping under the Southern moon. The night birds cry and——"

"And then, I presume, you wake up."

The Worm Turns.

Emancipated Woman (1904)—My dear!

Unemancipated Husband (timidly)—Yes'm.

Emancipated Woman (sternly)—Your hat bill is perfectly outrageous! The idea of paying three dollars for that bit of shoddy stiffened over a block! If you were not a mere butterfly of fashion, and the very personification of extravagance, you would let your hair grow long and go without a hat, as the football players do.

Not a Pedestrian.

Visiting Relative—You don't walk around the city much, do you?

Boston Hostess—Oh, no. It is a long distance around the city. But I walk about the streets a good deal.

Another Brute.

Wife—Ever so many women are becoming artists.

Husband—Yes, it is a business in which they can talk while they work.

Unspoken Sympathy.

Mrs. Oldboy—You forgot to congratulate the bride, didn't you, John?

Oldboy—No, I didn't forget it. I may be wrong and I hope I am, but I didn't feel as if I could congratulate her without posing as a hypocrite.

Mrs. Oldboy—Why, John! What in the name of common sense do you mean?

Oldboy—She's married to a young man who not only smokes cigarette and parts his hair in the middle, but he also plays a mouth organ.

An Uproarious Bridal.

"What's the row over on the next street?"

"Only a wooden wedding."

"Wooden wedding?"

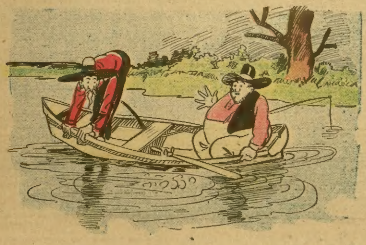
"Yes; a couple of Poles getting married."

Must Keep Moving.

Weary Willie—Hard times, ain't they?

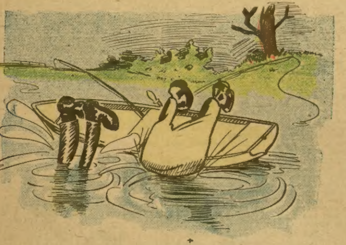
Dusty Rhodes—Yer bet. Keeps a feller hustlin' to keep from working.

HAD TO BE DONE.

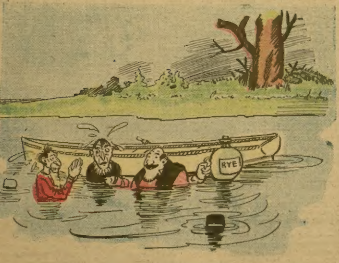


Colonel Kentuck—Poor feller! Gone under for the last time, and he was a good guide, too! It's a pity we can't swim.

Colonel—Bludgoah—Seems to me he was holdin' onto that jug when he fell in—



(Splash!)



"We just had to save your life, Mr. Tallfish, at any risk, sah."

Little Difference.

Michael Davitt, during his recent visit to America, talked one day to a reporter about the cheerfulness of the Irish character.

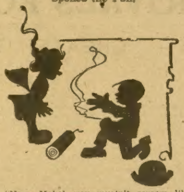
"The very poorest among us don't despond," he said. "No man's condition is so wretched but he can crack a joke about it.

"There was a poor old peat cutter one day whom the parish priest invited to his house to dinner.

"'Come in, Pat,' he said. 'It isn't much of a dinner—only beef, beer and potatoes—but, indeed, you're very welcome to it.'

"'Sure, your reverence,' said the old fellow, his eyes twinkling. 'I'd have you make no apologies about the dinner. It's the same as I'd be getting at home, barrin' the beef and beer.'"

Spoiled the Fun.



"Now, Mabel, you mustn't scream like you did when I fired the last one. You made so much noise I couldn't hear the fire-cracker."

His Disability.

The lawyer was examining him concerning his qualifications as a juror.

"Have you ever served on a jury?" he asked.

"No, sir," answered the man. "I've been drawn a good many times, but I was always too smart to get caught on a jury."

"What's that, sir?" interrupted the judge, sternly. "Do you boast of your smartness in escaping jury duty?"

"No, Your Honor," said the man. "Not at all. When I said I was too smart I meant that I was always excused because the lawyers thought I wasn't ignorant enough."

Everything for the Best.

"Yes, sir, I allus have believed Providence does ever'thing fer the best!"

"How 'bout that March hurricane?"

"Split the trees to kindlin' wood—stove length."

"Well, how 'bout the airthquake?"

"Swallered the land ten minutes 'fore the sheriff come to levy on it—praise God!"

Needed More Room.

Miss Buyem—I never saw furniture and carpets so cheap. The papers are just crammed with bargains.

Mrs. Buyem—I know it, and there isn't room in this house for another thing.

Miss Buyem—How horrid! I will have to let all those lovely bargains go, or else get married.

A Practical Girl.

He—I know my income is small, but don't your think we could get along?

She—I'm afraid not.

He—You told me that you went to a cooking school.

She—Yes, but they did not teach me how to make wind-pudding.

Not Eagle-Eyed.

Sharpe—I hear that the Baltimore police wear goggles to cover their eyes from the dust.

Wealton—H'm! That's not the only city where the eyes of the police are covered.

Fine Finish.

Gunner—But Russia has some fine warships in the far East. They are armored.

Guyer—Well, it won't be long before they are Japanned.

Worth a Fortune.

"Just to think, giraffes are quoted at $10,000 each."

"Gracious! They must be the J. P. Morgans of the quadruped family."

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THE SODA WATER GIRL.

The shades of night were falling fast
When to the soda fountain passed
A youth who led a damsel nice
And said, while feeling for the price,
"Vanilly."

"Try not the drink," we said to her,
"And you," to him, "don't you know, sir,
That microbes linger in the stuff?"
He answered us in accents gruff.
Chestnuts!'

Then to the maiden fair we turned:
"O, lady, have you never learned
How typhoid lurks within the fizz?"
She merely smiled and said: "Mine is
Choc'late."

Alas, they quaffed the fateful cups
With many smiles and smacks and sups,
And then he turned, with tender eye,
And sighed to her: "Suppose we try
Another."

Again we warned them of their fate,
How germs are said to radiate
From syrup jars and soda spouts,
They said—we could not rouse their doubts—
"Strawb'ry."

And so they kept the man at work
Until he gave a parting jerk
At all the spigots, then in quaint
Apologetic tones, said: "Ain't
No more left."

They rose and went, still blithe and gay,
And after they had gone away
We looked all through that soda fount
Intending all the germs to count—
'Twas empty.

SORE TRIALS.

"Here he is at last, boys," chirped the night clerk as the versatile inventor stepped blithely into the hotel and asked if he might have his old room at the rear of the top floor. "Thought you had forgotten us or stumbled against some fate in the form of marriage or some other get-rich-quick scheme."

"Hardly marriage," sighed the inventor, as he scrawled his signature on the register in hieroglyphics symbolical of his eccentricity. "I've frequently given marriage serious consideration, but have been too busy uncovering secrets of domestic felicity to find time for the ceremony of marriage itself. For instance, boys," he continued, with a wave of the hand which embraced the entire coterie of loungers, "what good would a wife be to me without one of my patent rotary washing machines? Again, how could we expect the highest measure of happiness without a set of my Merry-Be-Sad-Irons? At present I have in mind plans for an automatic churn which will turn out any given quantity of butter wanted at a stated time, and an egg-beater attachment on the side."

"Whatever became of that pneumatic pancake turner you showed us the drawing of during your last visit?" asked the piano tuner. "That looked to me like a good thing for quick-lunch rooms, provided it could be regulated to work fast enough."

"That was the trouble; it worked too fast and too hard. I finally sold it to a farm machinery concern and they put it on the market as a hay tedder. Works great, too. That's the trouble with me, same trouble all inventors work under; we have a good idea, get it in working order, but never succeed in giving the result a practical application. Then after we have done all the hard thinking, some bald-headed business man with weasel eye and an india-rubber bank account buys our idea for a stipend and converts it into real money."

"But you got something out of the invention?" questioned the night clerk. "You surely did not let go of your patent rights for nothing."

"Not exactly nothing. You see, I was so engrossed with the plot of a combination grinder for hamburgher and scissors that I let the pancake turner go for a song. Ten dollars down and 1 per cent of the net profits is my share, but I have been too busy to collect the royalties."

"Got a system of checking up the sales, of course?" suggested the shoe drummer, who knows all about the difficulties of collecting commissions.

"Not exactly a system, but I guess it's all right. You see, I never could master the intricacies of bookkeeping, and as the manufacturer is an expert at figuring profits, I leave it all to him. I got the $10 all right, though, and invested it at once in materials for a model self-acting razor which will work while you sleep. During the day it can be turned into a carpet sweeper or a towel rack, and ought to be a good seller after it's introduced."

"But will you get anything out of it?" inquired the piano tuner.

"Can't tell yet, but I may realize enough to get me started on a new recipe I've just discovered. It's a splendid shoe polish and equally good for sore throat. I'm going upstairs now to study out the exact proportions of gasoline needed for best results. If you'll excuse me, I'll say good-night."

"Good-night!" echoed the assembly, and for the next hour all were lost in wonderment as to why inventors rarely realize on their pet theories.

Cause and Effect.

Wedderly—My dear, you have improved wonderfully in your music since we were married.

Mrs. Wedderly—Why, John, how can you say that when I no longer play or sing?

Wedderly—That's where the improvement comes in.

Ever Notice It.

Simkins—What is the diameter of a silver dollar?

Timkins—Oh, it varies.

Simkins—How's that?

Timkins—It is smaller on pay-day than it is a few days later.

RIVALS FOR WEALTH;

OR

GREATER THAN GOLD.

✣ ✣ ✣

BY ELLA MARTIN.

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CHAPTER VIII.

HOW IT ENDED.

It was after liberating Ethelyn that Jack Raynor repaired to Alberta's prison cell. Her letter was in his pocket, but what did he care for its contents, its revelations, its surprises? If she but loved him what did it matter?

He stood before her now, looking at her quietly, indulgently, a smile on his lips, a yearning in his eyes.

The real Alberta had left him for a life upon the stage, and she would not have returned as long as that life satisfied her. But Phyllis Dale, the one to whom his girl betrothed had bequeathed him, together with her name and all her belongings—this girl had given him up because she felt her unworthiness on account of the deception his betrothed had instigated and influenced her to perpetrate.

He could well understand the temptation this homeless, friendless girl, who had been tempest-tossed on the ocean of life, had undergone. And his love was measured by the strength of the love he received.

"Have you come to reproach me, Jack?" Alberta asked in an unsteady voice. "Or to kill me? You said you would do that, you know."

"I have come to execute my threat," he answered, "but I will spare you on one condition."

Her great, dark eyes questioned him.

"And that condition—what is it?" they asked plainly enough. And he answered those questioning orbs in words.

"That you marry me," he said.

He was beside her now, his arms about her waist.

"Darling, darling!" he said softly, "we love each other; what matters anything else in all the wide world?"

She was sobbing on his breast.

"I don't deserve your love, dear. Why do you forgive me?"

"Because I love you," he said.

"Come," he added, "I will take you to a justice. We will leave this city husband and wife."

"But——" she began.

"I have obtained your release. There is no bar between yourself and freedom. Henceforth I shall be your jailor.

"How did you accomplish it, Jack?"

"By producing the missing girl. You shall hear the particulars all in good time."

She remembered then that she had declared to Robert Grieve that she would marry the man who was instrumental in setting her at liberty. She had meant that as a promise to the lawyer who was working in her interest. But, after all, as things had turned out, the promise had given her to Jack Raynor, whom she loved and who loved her in return.

"I will marry you at once," she said, "if you still want me."

"Come, then," said Jack, smiling down upon her. And she placed her hand trustfully in his.

It was the following day that a party of three drove up to the gates of Dalton House and demanded an entrance of James Gibson.

Homer Dalton was sitting alone in the parlor of the gloomy building when the door was thrown open, not by his manservant, but by Jack Raynor, who was a complete stranger to him. And directly behind him were Ethelyn Cleave and Alberta Lynn.

The old man was looking more aged than ever. He was not in the best of tempers, and, seeing a stranger in his house, he sprang up excitedly.

"What means this intrusion?" he fumed. "Who are you, sir?"

"A friend of the nieces who so lately suffered injustice at your hands,' said Jack, sternly. "I now restore them to you."

He stepped aside and the two women entered the room and stood before their uncle.

The face of Homer Dalton went suddenly white, then began to turn slowly to a dark, purplish red.

He realized fully now that his secret would not be kept by Ethelyn, who had suffered such an outrage at his hands. His attack upon her would call for punishment now. The public would soon know that his niece had been imprisoned at his instigation, and falsely accused by him; that he would have to suffer for the crime he himself had committed, while Ethelyn might have remained immured behind asylum walls, away from the world and deprived of the blessed privilege of freedom, and all to hide the fact that in his younger days he had committed a crime which merited capital punishment.

He tried to speak when he fully realized what had come upon him; but his tongue would not obey his will. He struggled for breath and grew purple in the face, and his trembling, wrinkled hand went up to his throat.

It all happened in an instant, and as yet no one had spoken after the girls entered the room.

Then, as Ethelyn stepped forward, he gave one gurgling sound that was half a cry, and fell in a writhing heap upon the polished oaken floor.

James heard the fall and at once rushed into the room to his master's aid. Gently he lifted the white head from the floor.

"It is a fit!" he cried excitedly. "Go for a doctor, some of you! You!" he finished pleadingly, looking imploringly at Jack.

"Let me help you put him to bed first," Jack replied. "It is a paralytic stroke, no doubt."

"Yes, he has had them before. He will never get over this one, he is so old."

The two men bore him to his room, and then Jack went silently out, leaving the sick man in the care of his servant.

As soon as possible the doctor came. The two nieces waited outside the chamber for the doctor's verdict.

"He is sinking fast," he told them. "He will probably remain conscious to the last, but he will never speak again. It is paralysis, and he is too old to recover."

Alberta waited to hear no more. She entered the chamber and going up to the bedside she bent over the old man lying helpless there.

"The game is played out," she said to him, "and you are beaten by a woman."

His restless eyes told her that he understood.

"Listen," she continued. "You thought to amuse yourself with two helpless women, whom you believed to be scheming for your money. You cannot now change your will, and Robert Grieve will get the bulk of your fortune."

The burning eyes contained an inquiry.

"Ah," she answered, "servants gossip sometimes, and I drew it out of them carefully; they are not to blame for telling it—it is all my fault. But I got the information, then I made the acquaintance of Robert Grieve, your chosen heir. You took me to the city yourself to meet him. I fooled you while you were planning to fool both Ethelyn and myself by arousing our hopes and then leaving us entirely out of your will. And I would not miss having you know that you were worsted by a woman, the very thing that you have tried so hard to prevent.

"I have made an impression on Robert Grieve, and have accepted a proposal of marriage from him. So you see a woman will, in a way, have the handling of your money, despite your prejudice; and that woman is one of the nieces whom you thought to tantalize and trick, and then leave to suffer disappointment."

"There was anger in the eyes now, and Alberta went on relentlessly:

"The fact that I have outwitted you is more satisfaction to me than gaining the money. For, to tell the truth, I shall hand Ethelyn over to your lawyer-heir; that will serve the purpose quite as well, and I prefer the man who brought us here. He it was who traced Ethelyn to the place where you had her confined, because he wanted to liberate me.

"Your heir is quite an impressionable young man, and I think he will be satisfied with the change of brides, when he learns of my earnest desire to go with Jack Raynor, who has money enough of his own to satisfy me.

"I will now bid you good-by, Mr. Dalton. I am not nor never was your niece, and therefore have tricked you more than you desired to trick me. I read your purpose in the very beginning, and intended you should come out second best."

She made him a sweeping bow and replied in answer to what the pale lips struggled to say:

"Yes, 'adventuress'; I am that, and I have won the game you played with me."

She swept out of the room then, leaving the old man to realize that his wicked life had not brought him triumph in the end.

Was Alberta Lynn his Nemesis? Would he have mumbled a prayer could that paralyzed tongue have given utterance? It is hard to tell, for no sound ever again passed the lips.

As for Alberta, she repented in a measure for her hardness to a dying man, and turned the moment she was outside the door and came back to his bedside.

She bent over him again.

"I am sorry," she said, "for my harshness. Forgive me, and I will do what I can for you. I beg of you to repent and offer from your heart a prayer to an all-merciful God.

"The world shall not know your history. I can manage Ethelyn, and she shall swear to be silent. The diary shall be burned; she has told no one but Jack and me, and we will keep the secret.

"I am not so bad as I seem, and if you had been honest with me I should never have stooped to scheming.

"Close your eyes," she added, "if you hear me, if you approve of what I am willing to do for you."

The wrinkled eyelids drooped over the staring eyes, and the lips moved, but no sound issued from them. Then the eyes unclosed again and there was a beseeching, questioning look in their depths.

What was it? She racked her brain for the answer. What was that question in his eyes.

"I am trying to think," she told him. "I am trying to think what it is you want. Is it James you wish to speak of?"

The eyelids closed in answer.

"Ah, yes," she murmured softly, "you do not want James punished for his part in the abduction of Ethelyn. Never fear, he shall not suffer for his faithfulness to you even in that. I will see to it. The truth of that affair shall never be known to the public. You can trust me. Are you content—are you satisfied?"

Again the eyes were closed, and then quickly opened again.

At that moment the man James entered the room, and throwing himself by the bedside broke forth into lamentations.

"It was a woman from first to last," he cried, "always a woman who brought trouble into his life! The treachery and deceit of a woman was the cause of his downfall in the beginning. And now—now a woman has been the death of him! The sight of Miss Cleave come back again brought on this fatal stroke."

"But that," said Alberta, "was not the fault of Miss Cleave.

"I have just promised your master," she continued, "that it shall not be known how faithful you have been to him in the matter of aiding him in Ethelyn's abduction. He seemed to wish it."

The man reached out and impulsively grasped the hand of his master—that cold, lifeless hand—and stroked it gently.

And thus Alberta left them together.

She found Ethelyn and called her aside.

"If you want to inherit Homer Dalton's fortune you can do so if you will obey me in everything. Will you do so?"

"Yes. But you?"

"I? I am Jack Raynor's wife. It happened this morning. I have all I desire, but I have a plan by which I can make you the wife of the heir to the Dalton fortune. It might have been mine, but I preferred Jack, and I give it to you on one condition. And that is, that you swear to keep forever a secret the abduction and every thing connected with it. I have promised Mr. Dalton that his servant, James Gibson, shall not be exposed, and that the secret of the diary shall never be revealed. Do you swear?"

"Certainly. I have no wish to disgrace my uncle's memory by making public his crime. Neither have I any wish to make James trouble. I brought it all upon myself."

"Then listen." And Alberta unfolded a plan by which she could manage to bring about a meeting between Ethelyn and the impressionable lawyer, Robert Grieve.

"I have written to him," she explained, "telling him of my marriage, and when he knows me false he will lose his fancy for me. Hearts can usually be caught on the rebound, and you can manage it easily enough."

And truth to say, Ethelyn did manage it with such dexterity that less than three months later she was the wife of Robert Grieve, and very well satisfied with her lot.

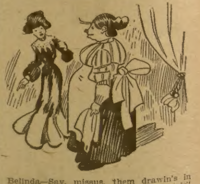
Long before this Homer Dalton had gone to his last account. And Robert, much to his surprise, found himself in possession of a legacy which made him independent for life.

Alberta did not envy the good fortune of her rival, for she had a strong, true heart which had stood by her through everything, and she was wealthy in that which was more than gold.

Together she and Jack returned to their former home, and the truth of Alberta's history was never made known to the parents of the real Alberta Lynn. Why should it have been? A sorrow which the brain does not know the heart cannot grieve over.

The End.

Not Fast Colors.



Belinda—Say, missus, them drawin's in yer husband's den ain't "wash drawin's" at all.

Mrs. Daublets—Why not, pray?

Belinda—Why, I tried to wash the dust off 'em and they all run together.

His Simple Rule.

"The structure of the tooth," says the lecturer on dentistry, "is arranged in sections. The outer wall has feeling, but is not so highly sensitive that it will convey the sensation of pain.

"It is not until we attack the interior layers that we reach the truly sensitive portion of the tooth, and even then it is at times difficult to tell when our instruments have pierced the nerve-center. However, there is one infallible rule."

"And what is that, Professor?" asks a close listener. "How may we tell when we are inflicting pain?"

"The patient jumps."

The Secret of the Crevasse

BY MAUD SOMERVILLE GIBNEY.

CHAPTER I.

DAPHNE'S DISAPPEARANCE.

It was a glorious morning in August, and a crowd of tourists and Alpine climbers were lounging in front of the Riffel Hotel, enjoying the sunshine and the unsurpassable panorama of snow-clad heights and crevasse-furrowed glaciers which stretched in a great bow from east to west before them. The more devoted mountaineers had set out hours previously, so that they might perform, at any rate, a portion of their climbs over snow which was still firm and hard from the night's frost. But there were others of a more tender nature, who only meditated smaller excursions, occupying a few hours between breakfast and dinner, and these were busy over their guidebooks, making out their routes, or stowing away their luncheons in ample pockets, fastening more securely the laces of their nailed climbing boots, or hunting for their alpenstocks in the stand by the door.

Among these was a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl, with a complexion that told of healthy, outdoor exercise, tanned by the sun a faint brown, such a complexion as is rarely seen save on young women who delight in vigorous outdoor exercise. She was clad in a skirt of homespun which was short enough to reveal a pair of stout-laced boots, nailed in the orthodox fashion, while her open jacket of the same material exposed a flannel blouse with a turn-down collar, set off by a scarlet tie. On her head she wore a broad-brimmed, soft felt hat, bound round with a wisp of dark blue and white spotted silk—colonial fashion.

Very workmanlike looked Daphne Wyndham as she stood before her aunt, Mrs. Chester, who was seated in a wicker chair with an unopened copy of the London Times on her knee. At Daphne's side was a young man of some twenty-eight years of age, almost too swarthy to be considered handsome, with an habitually dreamy, distant look—in his eyes, which spoke of a brain immersed in problems far removed from matters of the moment, yet as the girl turned her sunny eyes toward him his face lit up with a sudden smile, which completely banished the melancholy look which so frequently rested there. Ralph Cathcart was Daphne's cousin, and more than that, her fiance. It was a case of true love between them, in spite of the fact, which slanderous tongues were only too eager to make capital out of, namely, that Daphne was the owner of large estates in England, which, in case of her death unmarried, would pass to her cousin.

Daphne, chaperoned by her uncle and aunt, the Chesters, had been making a prolonged tour in Switzerland, and had reached the Riffel Hotel, when urgent business recalled Mr. Chester to London, and the two ladies would have been left without a cavalier had not Ralph Cathcart, who had been climbing in the Mont Blanc district, altered his plans and come to their rescue.

"Well, my dears," Mrs. Chester was saying, "don't do anything rash, and be sure and put stockings over your boots if you go on those nasty glaciers. Though why people want to go tumbling about on ice and snow when there's good solid ground for them to walk on is more than I can understand."

"You trust Daphne to me, Aunt Manie, and she will be all right. We are going nowhere out of sight of the hotel, and you can watch us if you like, through the telescope."

"My dear boy, you know I never can see clearly through those contrivances. My own eyes are far better."

"Well, perhaps Captain Ferrers will do the watching for you, aunty," said Daphne, turning to an old gentleman sitting in the next chair.

"Delighted, my dear, delighted! It will be like old days on board ship again, though we had none of those lubberly three-legged affairs then, but held our spy-glasses in our own hands, like men."

"We shall have to mind how we behave ourselves, Daphne," said Ralph, laughing.

"Ay, you young dog, you will! No yardarms getting locked, nothing of that kind, mind, or I shall have it all down in the log in no time." And the old sailor roared again at his somewhat heavy wit.

"Well, my dears, be off and enjoy yourselves. But just see if there are any letters for me first; I see the postman coming."

"I'll go," said Ralph, and he disappeared into the hotel, to return in a few moments with three or four letters for Mrs. Chester, one for Daphne, and a registered one, the contents of which consisted of Bank of England notes, he transferred to a pocket inside his waistcoat, throwing the envelope away.

"Now I think we're ready," he said, as Daphne, having finished reading her epistle, handed it to her aunt.

"Yes, come along, or we shall lose the best part of the day. Good-by, auntie," and with a smiling nod to Captain Ferrers, Daphne led the way down the path that descended to the Gorner Glacier.

It was the intention of the young people to cross this and gain the Schwarze Glacier beyond, famed for its ruggedness and crevasses, for Daphne had long wished to see what she called a "real glacier," and not one of those particularly smooth-surfaced ones, like the Mer de Glace, over which any one can cross without the least difficulty.

It was some hours later. Luncheon was over at the hotel, and again the guests who had remained at home that day were securing themselves outside. Captain Ferrers had taken possession of the hotel telescope, that adjunct to every Swiss caravansary, and with his eyes glued to it, was watching the movements of Daphne and Ralph on the Schwarze Glacier across the deep valley, and reporting from time to time to Mrs. Chester, who was seated beside him.

"They are getting to the rougher part now," he said, "and seem to be in difficulty over a large block of ice. No! Cathcart has climbed it and has helped your niece up. They're all right again."

"Are they roped?"

"No; I suppose there's no necessity. Cathcart knows what he's about. He's known among the guides as a careful climber, and he's been over this part several times before. They're going on again."

"Well, I call it sheer madness to [illegible] for risking one's neck on [illegible] rough glaciers and sloppy snow mountains, when comfortable trains to carry you to the top have been provided."

"Ah! They've stopped," said the captain, too engrossed to take notice of the lady's last remark. "They're on a smooth bit of surface now, close to what looks like a big crevasse. He's taking her hand. My God! She's gone, she's gone!"

"What is it? What is it?" cried Mrs. Chester, starting up, and in so doing upsetting the telescope and stand.

"Daphne's gone, I tell you!"

"Gone!" shrieked Mrs. Chester, falling back in a chair.

All rushed forward at the captain's words, and crowding round in their eager attempt to refix the telescope, only made matters worse, until, assuming his old role, he said, sharply: "Leave it to me! Look to her!"

It seemed hours to those standing round before Captain Ferrers at last found the spot on which his gaze had been fixed when the instrument was overturned.

"I can see no one; no one. Cathcart has vanished as well!" he exclaimed, in tones fraught with horror.

"Can't you see him anywhere—coming down for help, or signaling? Let me look. Let me look."

"You may look, but there's nothing to see. We must get together a rescue party at once," he said, with a determined look on his white, drawn face. And as he passed Mrs. Chester he gently took her hand, saying. "Don't give way, dear lady. Don't give way. It may be nothing after all. Trust in Providence, and rely on my doing my best for them."

Mrs. Chester could not answer because of her sobs and tears; but a pressure on his hand spoke more deeply than any words could have done.

In a few moments the intelligence was known all over the hotel, and among the guides who were waiting about on the chance of an engagement. A rescue party was quickly formed, armed with ropes, ice axes, blankets, stimulants and everything likely to be required an such an occasion, the old captain accompanying it, having first pointed out through the telescope the exact spot where he had last seen Daphne and Ralph.

When at length, after a hurried march of two hours, that spot was reached, the insensible form of Daphne was seen lying on a ledge some dozen feet down the crevasse. Beside her, and resting on the ledge and against the opposite wall, was the ice ax Ralph had carried, but not another trace of him was to be seen. Thousands of feet downward, until it lost itself in a deep blue nothingness, stretched the awful chasm, and what dread secret it contained time, and time alone, could reveal.

A guide was quickly fastened to a rope and lowered by his companions to the ledge, and it was not many minutes before the still unconscious Daphne was lying on the surface of the glacier, with the afternoon sun lighting up her marble features. A rapid examination showed she had sustained a fracture of the leg, and very tender and careful were the hands of those rough sons of the mountains as they fastened the limb in primitive splints, and forced a little brandy between the blue lips.

And while they awaited returning consciousness, others made a hasty examination of the neighborhood, in the hopes of finding some traces of the missing man. But it was lost labor, and with careful, melancholy steps the party took their downward way, bearing a bruised and broken form, and a tale of death as the result of the light-hearted excursion of the morning.

It was not until the following afternoon that the poor girl was able to give a coherent account of what had happened, as far as she knew, for besides a broken leg, she was suffering from a slight concussion of the brain.

It would appear that, on reaching the crevasse, she had expressed a wish to look down it, and against the urgent entreaty of Ralph, she drew near the edge. Ralph threw out his arm to draw her back, and in endeavoring to avoid it, she slipped, felt herself falling, then a crushing shock and darkness, until she again found herself in the sunlight, with a vision of anxious faces bending over her.

Such was the August tragedy of the crevasse-furrowed Schwarze Glacier.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXPLANATION.

It was a toil-stained, weary and haggard man who stumbled, rather than walked, into the little village of Fiery and made his way to the Hotel des Cimeo Blanches long after darkness had fallen and blotted out the beauties of the northern mountainous barrier of Italy. He entered the dining-room, though the long tables had been stripped of their white cloths and vases of flowers, and all the lamps save one had been extinguished.

Presently an astonished waiter advanced and inquired what the intruder desired.

The latter said he wished something to eat.

"Immediately. And will monsieur require a room?"

"Yes."

"And [illegible] baggage?"

The stranger looked around him as though he hardly grasped the question. "I have none."

"Then it will come tomorrow?"

"Perhaps. Bring me something to eat—anything and wine."

"Immediately." And leaving the room, the waiter quickly returned with a visitor's book, and pen and ink, which he placed before the stranger, while he spread a cloth at one end of the table and made preparations for the meal.

The stranger gazed at the book, took up the pen, hesitated, laid it down again, closed his eyes, and passed his hand over his forehead wearily. Again he took up the pen, dipped it in the enk, and commenced reading the names in the book. Then he started to write. He formed the letter "J," then passed his pen through it and again hesitated, and it was not until the waiter had placed on the table a dish of chicken and a salad, together with a flask of Chianti, that he threw down the pen with a sigh.

"Ah! Mistair Robert Mac-ker-shorr," read the waiter aloud, proud of the little English he had picked up at Gatti's in far-away London.

"Yes, Robert Mackershaw," repeated the visitor, and commenced his meal without further parley.

The waiter looked in from time to time, but the well-veiled air of suspicion with which he had at first regarded him had vanished now. The Scotch name in the book had inspired confidence, and the fact that he traveled without even a knapsack was set down to one of the many eccentricities of those half-mad dwellers in the northern land.

The following morning the account was discharged with a new Bank of England note for five pounds, which serves as a passport to any hotel throughout the civilized world, and the waiter, his heart gladdened by a substantial tip, watched the "mad Englishman," as he described him to the chef, descend the slope toward Giacomo.

It was fully two months later when Robert Mackershaw stepped out of the train at Valencia. What he had done with himself since leaving Fiery even he would have been puzzled to say exactly. He had been in many places, and seen many sights, and at length had found himself in Spain. He spoke the language without difficulty, and appeared completely at home. He put up at one of the smaller hotels, and employed his time in a lazy way, wandering about the city and viewing the sights.

It was evening, long after darkness had fallen, as he was strolling through the outskirts of the town, when his ears were assailed by a piercing cry in a woman's voice. The neighborhood appeared deserted as he rushed down a side street and came across the form of a beautiful woman lying motionless just within the archway of an unpretentious house. She was bleeding profusely from a knife stab in the arm.

At first he though her dead, but as he bent over her there was a slight movement, and her eyes opened.

He rose to his feet and thundered at the door within the archway, and then returned to the lady, raised her head onto his knees, and while waiting the result of his knock, endeavored to stanch the flow of blood.

After a few moments the door opened and a wrinkled, parchment-faced old Spanish woman, bearing a lamp in one hand, appeared on the threshold.

"Ah!" she cried, catching sight of Mackershaw and his charge, "what is it? What is it?"

"This lady is hurt—wounded. Will you let me take her into your house till she recovers a little?" replied Mackershaw, in fluent Spanish.

"My house! Caramba! 'Tis her house. My poor mistress! I knew it would be so. I knew it! I knew it! Did I not say——"

"Don't chatter, my good soul, but lead the way with the light," interrupted Mackershaw, gently raising the almost inanimate form, and, as it were, driving the garrulous old woman before him into the archway.

She led him into an apartment comfortably furnished in the Spanish style, and here he deposited his burden on a couch and aided the old woman in binding up the wound and applying restoratives. At length their efforts were crowned with success, and the lady was able to sit up. She was dazed and shaken, and seemed to be suffering acutely.

"The senor had better leave my mistress to me now," whispered the old woman to Mackershaw. "She wants rest and quiet; the presence of a stranger only disturbs her."

"Very well; but I shall send a doctor as I go."

"No, no, no! The senor must not. Oh, he must not! I can do everything, and my mistress would not wish it."

Mackershaw hesitated, and then, feeling that he had, perhaps, no right to intrude further, left the house, saying he would call the following day to inquire how the lady was.

He did so and found that, with the exception of the wound, which was still painful, she was practically well. She received him graciously, overwhelmed him with thanks, and blushingly informed him that her wound was the work of a jealous admirer whom she disliked and had dismissed. Further than that, she told him her name—Isabella Montez—that she was an orphan, possessed of an ample fortune, and that she and her old duenna were traveling for pleasure.

This first visit was the forerunner of many, and the lovely Spanish girl and Mackershaw quickly became deeply enamored of each other. Together they traveled to the Riviera, and at Monte Carlo fortune smiled her brightest upon them. Again and again they left the tables heavy winners, and, when weary of the gay life, they returned once more to Spain, it was with the intention of consecrating their love before the altar.

Neither Isabella nor Mackershaw had any friends or relatives whom they cared to summon for the ceremony, and they arranged that it should take place quietly at the old church of San Jose, in Madrid, where they were then staying.

The evening of the day previous to the one fixed for the wedding, Mackershaw parted from his inamorata, saying:

"Isabella, we bid farewell to each other for the last time. Tomorrow will see the end of our separation, and the merging of our two lives in one. I shall count the hours till we meet again, never more to part. Farewell, my dearest, until we meet before the altar."

• • • • • • •

Mackershaw's impatience led him to arrive at the San Jose church some time before the hour fixed for the ceremony, and he was striding up and down the [illegible] restlessly, when he suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder, and heard a voice saying:

"By Jove! old fellow, who would ever have thought of running across you here? Where on earth have you hidden yourself all these months?"

He turned quickly, and saw before him a face he seemed in a misty kind of way to recognize. Then something in his brain felt as if it snapped, and before the other could catch him, he fell forward, striking his head against the edge of a step.

It was a whole day before he recovered consciousness, and then, as his tired eyes slowly wandered round the apartment into which he had been carried, and rested on the features of the man sitting beside his bed, he said:

"Is Daphne safe?"

When his friend had answered "Yes, quite safe; don't worry, old man; it's all right," he heaved a gentle sigh and sank into a peaceful sleep.

It was some hours before he awoke, and when he did he was clearly stronger and better.

"How did they manage to get me back to the Riffel?" he asked, and then, with a trace of wonder in his voice, "But what on earth are you doing here, Banham? I thought you were going to be married this week."

"It's all right, old boy; I am married."

"Good!" And again he dozed off, the patient gradually growing stronger and more exacting in his inquiries, and making it more and more difficult for his friend, George Banham, to keep from him the fact that for over six months he had been living a life every incident of which was now obliterated from his memory as completely as though it had never been.

Banham, who, happening to be in Madrid on business for his firm, had so fortunately [illegible] the man who was supposed to be lying in the depths of the Schwarze Glacier, had, when at length he had obtained the address, wired to Mr. Chester the news of his discovery, and had quickly received a reply that he and his wife and niece were already on their way out. He was sitting waiting their arrival in the garden when an old Spanish woman was brought to him.

"Well, senora," exclaimed Banham, in his somewhat imperfect Spanish, rising, and removing his hat, "what can I do for you?"

"Ah, senor," she replied, "I have been directed here to see Robert Mackershaw, who was to have married my mistress had not misfortune come upon her in the shape of that son of Satan, her husband."

"What do you mean? Who is Robert Mackershaw?" asked the astonished Banham.

"The senor who was taken ill in the San Jose church, and is now lying in the room upstairs. I have heard. I know. I know."

"And he was going to marry your mistress! But you say she has a husband. It's nonsense."

The old woman grinned. "Ah, but he would not have known it. They would have left Spain directly afterward, and then who should tell him?"

Quick was Banham to comprehend the threatening of serious troubles ahead, but he assumed as brave a face as he was able, saying:

"And where is your mistress now?"

"Dead and buried. Did I not say her husband came upon her? He was jealous"—with a shrug of her lean shoulders—"and made quick use of his knife. And now, where am I to get another place?"

The old hag's self callousness disgusted Banham. He recognized that in what she had stated there was sufficient suggestion of truth to make further inquiries necessary, but, at the same time, she must not be allowed to see Ralph Cathcart. Pressing a piece of gold into her hand, he said:

"I regret to say Mr. Mackershaw is still far too ill to see anyone. You will have to wait. Leave your name and address in the hotel, and I will write to you."

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What remains can be quickly told. The arrival of Daphne Wyndham had a marvelous effect on the sick man. From the moment of their meeting he improved rapidly, and was soon able to be removed to England. It was only very gradually that the truth could be told him, for, from the moment when, racing down the Schwarze Glacier that August day in search of aid, he had slipped and struck his head against a sharp angle of a block of ice, until he awoke to consciousness in Madrid, life was a blank to him. He had not the faintest recollection of a single incident. And if ever man had a good, true friend, Cathcart had one in his old chum, George Banham. For, after the Chesters and Daphne had carried Ralph off, Banham still lingered in Madrid, and learned the true history of the connection of Isabella Montez and the man she knew as Robert Mackershaw. He understood that there was some excuse to be made for her, seeing that her husband had treated her brutally, and it was the result of one of his violent attacks upon her that had brought about her acquaintance with Cathcart in the first instance.

But he felt that what was plain to his understanding would be sneered and scoffed at by a too censorious world, and all he learned remained hidden in his own heart. Not one word did he breathe, even to Daphne, and to all the world save himself those six months in the life of Ralph Cathcart were as blank as though he had in truth been lying in the heart of the Schwarze Glacier.

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BOYS AND GIRLS CORNER

The Young Castaways;

OR

MAROONED ON A SAND-KEY.

BY ST. GEORGE RATHBORNE.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE "LOON."

It looked as though the whole game must be gone over again, and under conditions less encouraging than before, since their stock of food was now woefully limited and the matches few and far between, while chances of leaving the desert isle appeared more slender than ever.

Still, young blood does not long despond, and our boys began to build up new hopes. It was just as well that they could find more or less comfort in the change of companions. There were now three instead of five, and the chances were Bravo would prove a vast improvement over the burly Spaniard adventurer.

If the impulsive Antonio had only waited to see what came of the duel, all might have been well. Teddy was fain to believe the fellow, being treacherous by nature, had always intended running off from them at the first opportunity. He would not give him credit for the ordinary amount of gratitude toward those who had saved his wretched life.

However, it was folly crying over spilt milk, and, making the best of a bad bargain, they rejoined the trio, first having concealed the shotgun in the same old place.

Teddy and Maro took up their quarters in the cabin again, just as though they had never been forced out of the same, and thinking to save themselves more or less trouble they invited Bravo to share their shelter, which he immediately agreed to do, letting his fellows shift for themselves.

Thus, in a measure, the boys had bound the new commander to their fortunes.

He asked a thousand questions, it seemed, and would not think of trying to sleep until he had learned just how they chanced to come here on this lonely key, in company with that desperate lot of good-for-nothings under Da Gama, who, Bravo declared, had he only lived in Kidd's time would have been as picturesque a pirate as ever gently cut a throat or looted a Spanish galleon.

About midnight quiet settled over the camp, save for the nasal trumpetings of the native who lay stretched outside on the beach, regardless of mosquitoes or sand-flies.

Some hours later Teddy, chancing to awaken, and being troubled in his mind, sauntered forth to walk along the beach. Perhaps he had a lingering hope that Antonio might relent and come back for them; but this died away after he had tramped completely around the island without discovering the faintest trace of boat or Portuguese spongers.

The moon hung high in the blue heavens and made a night long to be remembered. Teddy was filled with vain regrets that their splendid scheme had been nipped in the bud, for with such a gentle night breeze as held forth they might have sailed many miles toward the west, where other islands were supposed to li

He had also hoped to discover another turtle, but disappointment awaited him in this particular also, for not a living, moving thing caught his eye on the glistening beach, where the little waves crept gurgling up in winrows, only to fall back after their ineffectual bombardment of the shore, a warfare that had been going on for countless ages, with little effect.

So Teddy, yawning, crawled into the shelter once more and snuggled down to secure further rest.

It was broad daylight when he came out again.

Already the fellows had replenished the fire, and were wondering where their breakfast was coming from.

Maro set them to work, thinking it wise to begin differently with this lot, and assume the position of leader from the start.

He showed them where bait could be found, and with a line apiece they began fishing for breakfast.

It is not the most satisfactory occupation in the world, and if the scaly denizens of the deep choose to act shy, one's stomach is apt to complain.

It happened, however, that one of the men was a skillful fisherman, and could get game if there was half a chance; so that presently he landed a sheepshead that weighed all of three pounds, upon which Bravo pounced and began to prepare for the pan.

This served to brighten things up a bit, as the odor of cookery always appeals to a hungry man and makes him see the silver lining to the clouds.

Bravo over the meal became social, and the boys voted him a vast improvement over the gruff Dago. Maro even washed his cuts and bruises received during his scrap with the giant on the preceding night, and which might give trouble if not taken care of, owing to the heat and the prevalence of insect life on the key.

Thus the new deal was started.

Teddy was disconsolate without his pet craft to tinker with, and never came in sight of the ocean without sending a wistful glance across the waters, as though still hopeful that Antonio might think better of it and return.

But the Portuguese evidently knew a good thing when he found it, and was plodding across the sea in the direction of the nearest land, making the little cruiser do her level best, for a sailor can find himself at home on any sort of a floating chip.

After all, their predictions of the preceding night came true, with regard to the weather, for about noon clouds scurried across the sky, and the wind increased to an ugly blow.

Maro declared he would not be entirely happy if caught out on the open sea in such a cockle-shell of a boat while such a storm was apparently brewing, and becoming philosophical explained to his grieving companion how it might after all have been the very best thing in the world that Antonio got away with the Loon, thus removing the temptation from them. It might not be pleasant, this remaining prisoners on the sand-key, but truly there were worse things than that to be endured, and one of them was a sudden sinking of the boat to which one's fortunes had been entrusted, leaving the adventurer floating on the rolling billows, the sport of the storm.

They made what preparations they could against the coming spell of bad weather. Another fishing expedition was instituted, and Maro skirmished around the oyster bed, picking up such innocents as might have escaped his last scrutiny.

The others secured an amount of fuel, though this was more difficult to find now that a fire had been burning almost continually since the first landing on the key two weeks previous.

When the deluge descended they were snugly housed, and could afford to smile at this part of the thing; although the presence of the ugly darkey, Ham, was an objectionable element to Teddy, who in his Canadian home had seldom come in contact with negroes.

It howled at quite a lively rate during the evening, and the boys no longer envied Senor Antonio, if so be the slippery Portuguese still navigated the boundless reaches of the Caribbean in the little shallop of a cedar cruiser. He must be good and frightened by this time. Perhaps the boat had taken in water again, despite Teddy's patching, and was floating almost level with the sea, with her passenger clinging to the mast in desperation.

Yes, there were other things less pleasant than this huddling under the shelter on the sandy island.

Their only secret now consisted of the gun that was hidden in the hollow heart of a palmetto tree, where the rain could hardly reach it to cause rust; and there they intended it should remain until such time as it might be needed to preserve their lives and liberties.

While they sat around, trying to cook something for supper, very naturally the conversation was upon a familiar topic, and this the fashioning of logs into a sort of craft such as the natives use in certain parts of the world.

Bravo declared it could be done, if the hatchet only held out, and announced it as his purpose to begin work as soon as the storm permitted, which declaration pleased the lads not a little, as it proved the metal of which the North Carolinian was made.

It was, therefore, only a matter of time ere they quitted their island for other quarters. Bravo would do it, he was the man to rough-hew the logs into a life-raft that would bear them all up in the midst of the roughest weather.

They liked this style of talk, and backed him up in every way possible, promising assistance as needed.

The storm lasted pretty much all of the next day, though changing its location radically as the core or center of disturbance swept past, heading as usual due west, where, striking the southern coast of Cuba, it would prabably rebound to the northwest and ravage the coasts of Florida

The boys calculated that long ere this Antonio must have paid the penalty for his rashness with his life.

When the rain finally let up they went along the beach to ascertain what damage had been done, as well as to see if something might not have been cast ashore in the shape of flotsam which would prove of value in their housekeeping.

Being thrown on their own resources is apt to make boys careful, as well as saving, and wherever they saw bits of wood on the beach the same were tossed further up on the land, so as to be safe from the next sweep of the tide.

In due time when dried thoroughly it would prove fine in the shape of material with which to boil things and do general cooking.

Some cocoanuts came ashore, possibly being a part of the cargo of a freight schooner bound with the same to some port of the States. These our boys seized upon with eagerness, and were soon engaged in drinking the liquid contents, which tasted simply delicious after the decidedly brackish water of the spring.

There were also several logs of mahogany, washed ashore from the deck of a lumber vessel, and which, despite their value, might be made to do valiant duty in keeping up the fire that must burn day and night in order to save matches.

Then a remarkable thing happened.

Teddy caught hold of his friend's sleeve and pointing ahead made some unintelligible sounds; but Maro did not need assistance in discovering what he wished him to see.

"Glory, it's the Loon!" he exclaimed, hardly knowing whether he was awake or dreaming.

There the little boat lay on the beach, just as the sea had cast her up, the old opening showing in her side, so that she had again been sustained by the air-tanks alone.

It was simply amazing, to think of her having been carried back over her course by the storm, and then spewed upon the island just as though the contract called for such a thing. Never in all his experience had Maro heard of such a miraculous happening. Why, it looked as though the demon of the storm recognized the fact that the legitimate owner of the marvelous craft had been deserted on this bit of sand, hardly more than a speck in the tumbling waste of waters, and had taken especial pains to bring the boat back to where it belonged.

Teddy ran up to the relic and handled it with genuine affection, examining it to see how severe the damage had been, and declaring he could repair it again and with even more speed than before, since he had now gone through some experience in the business

And what of Antonio—had he been drowned?

It looked that way, and there were certain things about the boat that puzzled Teddy. He pointed to a broken painter which he declared had not been there at the time they last saw the Loon; and finally he announced it as his opinion that the sloop had probably come upon the smaller boat, the crew forced Antonio to come aboard and give an account of himself, while the cruiser was towed behind until in the storm the painter had parted.

CHPTER XIII.

A GIFT OF THE STORM.

After all, the fact which caused most astonishment and pleasure was the return of the wonderful little craft after another exciting experience upon the tempestuous sea.

"A friend in need," remarked Maro, smiling with pleasure.

"Yes, I should say badly in need of further repairs, which I'll be only too glad to give. Why, life seems worth possessing, now that I've got the Loon under my care again," declared Teddy, rubbing his hand affectionately along the smooth surface of his pet.

"It seems as though we were fated to owe our escape to your boat, and it's useless trying to avoid destiny; but so long as we manage to get away from this miserable dot in the sea I for one care mighty little how it's done. So I say, doubly welcome to the Loon, and long may she flirt her saucy nose above the briny deep. Why, I guess she's about as hard to down as one of the wild birds she's named after."

They hauled the boat to her farmer anchorage, which act no doubt quite satisfied the cedar craft. The old place under the palmetto must have possessed wonderful attractions for the wanderer, since in making her second landing she had come within biscuit-toss of the location.

So eager was Teddy to get to work that he would allow nothing to delay him, but hunting up material began once more the task of mending the broken side.

As he had said, experience would enable him to work with more rapidity, and possibly a couple of days might see the job completed.

Maro felt as though he had a weight taken from his shoulders, and could turn his attention to the task of procuring food with a light heart.

Nor was this all that the storm brought them.

During the morning there washed up on the sand a box that apparently must have come from some wrecked vessel, and which aroused their liveliest anticipations until opened, when to their great delight it was found to contain packages of rice done up in paper—that is, it had once been so, but the whole contents of the case now presented a sad jumble, having been soaked thoroughly in the water.

Maro set to work trying to save a portion of the goods, spreading the rice out to dry in the sun, after thoroughly washing the grain in fresh water; and the result was fairly satisfactory, though in the cooking of the same they never had to bother adding any seasoning.

It is wonderful what strange legacies that whimsical old sea sometimes bestows upon those favored by fortune.

This was a red-letter day all around, it appeared.

The finny denizens of the deep were ready to lend their aid to making it a memorable occasion, for they showed a ravenous appetite, and, as Maro declared, were sighing for the pan, insomuch as to even snap at an almost bare hook.

So Bravo and his companions began to believe the island was not so bad a place upon which to be stranded, after all, and save for the loss of the sloop, together with the disappointment connected with their unsuccessful treasure-seeking, they had little reason to growl.

Maro conceived an aversion toward the negro from the start.

Perhaps it was the fellow's repulsive face and figure, for Ham certainly was no beauty and might have passed for an imp from the lower regions in any minstrel show. Then again he had a habit of staring with his big ox-eyes, as though filled with envy, and a desire to appropriate everything in sight; so that taken altogether he was hardly the kind to impress one favorably.

Perhaps in the long run Maro might learn something to his advantage, and that it does not always do to judge a man from outward appearances alone.

As evening drew near, the New England boy liked to seat himself in a favorite nook and look out across the sea. It might be noticed that his gaze was always turned toward the north, showing that his thoughts ranged in the direction of that faraway land where he had spent most of the years of his young life, and at least could boast of a few dear friends.

As for Teddy, he was of a more buoyant nature, and took to roaming as a duck does to water, so that no longings of this sort gave him cause for anxiety. The world was "his oyster," as he was pleased to express it in his boyish manner, which he intended to open as the humor seized him; so that it mattered little on what part of the globe he found himself temporarily stranded. There would always be strange things to be seen for one who used his eyes.

From his reflections Maro was aroused by the clamorous summons to supper, Teddy utilizing a tin-pan and a big spoon in lieu of a gong, and for which purpose it answered admirably.

The sun had disappeared, and already the afterglow was giving place to dusk, for there is little twilight in the Caribbean region, that being an attribute of more northerly quarters.

And looking toward the camp Maro was bound to confess that it did have a certain picturesque appearance, which would no doubt haunt him often in times to come, when he found himself confined within the brick and stone walls of a city, engaged it might be, in some prosaic work connected with an office, for he was much inclined to study law as a profession. The fire danced merrily and lighted up the figures of those around, making the negro look like a black gnome straight from the land of enchantment.

Then the appetizing odor of fried fish was wafted his way, exciting his desire for food. And there was also another reason for him to sniff the air, an indescribable smell that, in a faint way, reminded him of coffee, but which he could not understand.

It seems that Teddy, bent on experimenting, had tried to copy after some of the new-fangled substitutes for the prized berry, and roasted some of the rice until it was half burned, when he succeeded in mashing the grain between the hatchet and something else just as hard. The beverage resulting from this triumph of genius was muddy and extremely villainous, but, situated as they were, with Hobson's choice confronting them, they considered that the chef deserved their thanks for extracting even this aroma from the unpromising situation.

When fellows are determined to look on the bright side of everything, it is astonishing how little it takes to make them laugh, and feel good-natured, and there was much merriment over that supper of fried fish and rice coffee.

Bravo told how his folks often made a beverage from beans, wheat and rye, first browned in the oven and then ground. He declared they had learned how to like this concoction during the war, when coffee was an unknown article in the entire South.

Bravo was certainly a unique character, and he rattled off many of his experiences during a lifetime along the coast from Norfolk down to Key West.

Many of his adventures were humorous, and afforded our lads a hearty laugh, while others bordered on the mysterious, Bravo being, as it were, a believer in the supernatural

Of late he had widened his range and taken to sailing the big sea to the south, bent on unearthing some of that imaginary treasure of which he had heard so much; so that by degrees he was becoming a regular crank in all that line. Once the fever gets into a man's veins, it unfits him for all else.

Teddy showed a trifle of uneasiness at times, and his companion wondered what was worrying him; so while they sat together that evening, watching the stars that studded the azure sky, he demanded that the Canadian confide in him.

Perhaps he had an indefinite suspicion that Teddy, too, disliked the black, and suspected him of treachery.

To his surprise it was no such thing, and he found himself able to laugh at the fears expressed, they seemed so shadowy and without any foundation to him.

Teddy declared their island seemed to have a peculiar attraction, a sort of magnetic power to bring all things that way. They had in the first place been thrown upon its hospitable shores, then came the spongers' vessel with Da Gama and his men, after which the sloop in search of gold showed up, and now last but far from least, their wonderful little cruiser had returned after a voyage of many miles.

This being the case, Teddy found himself wondering whether sooner or later Da Gama and his rough followers might not drift back also, since it seemed next to impossible for anything to get away for good.

Of course Maro soon laughed the idea to scorn, declaring that it was beyond all reason, and the chances were they might never set eyes on that crowd again.

Although they had known each other only a few weeks, it seemed to the boys as though they must have always been acquainted, and no matter what the future had in store, it was certain that they would see much of each other from time to time.

That night was a peaceful one.

The wind only blew gently and the waves lapped the shore. Quite in contrast to the previous one when the storm-king reigned, and it was difficult to sleep at all, what with the noises without, and the crowded condition of the shelter.

Another day.

So ambitious was Teddy that, at peep of dawn, he stirred himself, and leaving Ham to cook breakfast, which he seemed capable of doing after his kind, the boy started to work on his boat, which had the greatest possible fascination for him.

Maro was bent on exploring a certain reef which he had reason to believe might harbor a brood of fat bivalves. He had made a rude raft from several spare spars, which he paddled about on, there being little difficulty in getting around so long as the sea was fairly calm and the wind kept quiet.

A glad shout attested some sort of a discovery, and presently Teddy saw him working away like a Trojan endeavoring to spear the trophies he could see down some six feet or so below the surface.

It proved slow work, without some sort of tongs, and so coming ashore Maro proceeded to manufacture the apparatus needed to encompass a general capture of the shell-fish.

This consumed pretty much all the morning, but it was worth while, for when he fairly got to work they had a royal feast spread before them.

He had come ashore with two loads, and, not satisfied, since the conditions might not be so favorable another day, had gone out again to rake up a third.

While busily engaged in his labor he felt something strike his little float a severe blow. Indeed, he came near being pitched into the water, and only recovered himself by an effort.

Filled with wonder and consternation he looked around, but nothing was in sight either on the sea or in the air, to which the shock could be ascribed.

A movement beneath the surface drew his attention, and to his surprise as well as horror he looked into wicked eyes that seemed to glow with a fiendish desire to do him evil.

Of course it was a shark, a monstrous fellow of the man-eating species, and Maro was always ready to declare it was his full belief the rascal had taken advantage of his occupation and bumped into the raft, with the intention of dumping him over, when he would be an easy mark for those cruel teeth that gleamed in such white and serried rows between those strong jaws.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOOD-BY TO DICKENS ISLAND.

Filled with indignation at having been made the victim of such a scare, Maro thrust his paddle at the big shark, intending to prod him in the eye as a gentle hint to mind his own business, and not come prowling around where he was not wanted.

To his utter astonishment the end of the paddle was seized between the jaws of the fish, and if he had not hastily let go he must have taken a plunge overboard.

This was beginning to look serious indeed.

Why, that miserable old shark must mean business, and had made up his mind to dine upon tender young New England hams.

Maro's shout attracted the attention of Teddy, who came running to the edge of the water to ascertain what was up.

When he learned the facts he saw that it was apt to prove a bad business, should the shark be cunning enough to upset the little raft by energetic means.

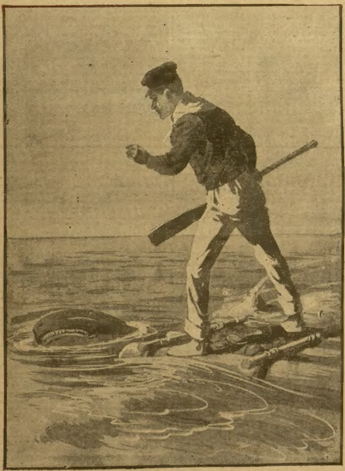
"Keep as still as you can, and don't excite him any more!" he called out, running off.

Presently Maro came back with the gun in his hands.

The others had also heard the noise, and were on the run for the scene, wondering what had happened.

Teddy called to them, and pointed to the Loon.

Apparently his repairs had reached a stage that admitted of the boat being launched, and this was just what he wished the men to set about doing.



It was a shark,

Maro had enough to do taking care of himself, for the ravenous fish was butting hard against the raft, as though bent on destroying the buoy that seemed to keep his intended prey away from his teeth; and each time his head came in contact with the light spars there was a shock that staggered the lad crouching there in alarm.

Really, Maro could be excused for feeling something akin to genuine terror as he contemplated those rows of glistening teeth so anxious to tear him limb from limb.

What made it worse was his utter helplessness. Could he have only had some means of fighting this persistent enemy, he would have felt better able to stand the situation. As it was, all he could do was to cling there and pray that Teddy would not arrive too late.

The raft had not been made to withstand such rude assaults, and Maro was afraid that at any minute its fastenings might part, thus hastening the catastrophe.

Teddy had leaped into the cedar boat, while Bravo followed him with a pole, intending to act the part of propeller.

They were coming with the utmost speed, and yet to Maro it seemed as though the Loon hardly moved, such was the state of his nerves.

Fortune was good to the imperiled lad, however, and despite the repeated shocks from the piratical fish the raft still held together until the others came upon the scene.

Teddy had inserted a couple of buckshot shells in the gun, some of which he always made it a practice to carry on his various expeditions, and which had been preserved along with the other ammunition.

The shark turned upon the new disturber of its peace, and rose as if to snatch a bite out of the modest cruiser's larboard streak.

This was just the opportunity Teddy craved, and he sent a double load downward, firing one barrel imediately after the other.

Meanwhile, Maro had succeeded in clambering into the boat, which was headed for the shore in a great hurry.

Teddy knew he had given the monster something to worry him, and the commotion in the water seemed to bear out his assertion.

Maro thought now he had quite enough oysters for one day. Somehow his ideas seemed to have changed radically, showing how circumstances alter cases.

Later on the raft washed ashore, and an examination showed the plain marks of the shark's teeth in the spars of soft pine.

But the incident did not prevent them from thoroughly enjoying the grand feast of oysters in various wa,s that Teddy, assisted by his black aid, placed before them for dinner.

Maro thought them well earned.

He dreamed about that same shark, and sat up in the middle of the night reaching for an oar with which to slash the audacious swimmer, only to hear Teddy's laugh, and finding that he was clutching desperately at that young man's locks.

And it afforded him considerable satisfaction, after the scare he had received, upon sauntering out at break of day, to discover some bulky object cast upon the shore, in which he was quick to recognize his enemy of the preceding day.

Teddy had reason to feel proud of his marksmanship, for his lead had done fearful execution about the monster's head, despite the foot or so of water through which the buckshot had to pass.

He was an object lesson, lying there on the sand, and Maro thought better of the fellow dead than alive.

The boat was ready for service, and all that remained was to settle as to their leaving the key.

Five would crowd it somewhat, but since no ballast was carried the weight would not prove too much, if only they could avoid getting in one another's way.

Food was what worried them most of all, since the supply had been totally exhausted, save as they drew upon their larder, the sea.

All the oysters they could carry were put aboard.

These would keep for days, and save them from actual starvation in case of necessity.

Besides, it was determined to cook what fish they were able, and the rice would also keep for a time after being boiled.

Fresh water was another source of trouble.

All the canisters were filled, so that they could count on a supply that would last a couple of days, if they were careful.

In this warm country one becomes very thirsty. This is aggravated by the brackish tendency of the water, while the very knowledge of a scarcity adds to one's thirst.

That night was a busy one at the camp.

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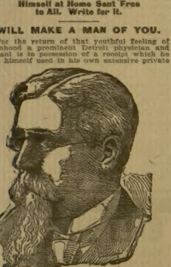

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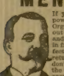

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They expected it to be the last on the key.

For better or worse it was their intention to cut loose on the morrow, unless from the signs they had reason to believe another storm might be brewing.

It seemed hopeless to look for the coming of assistance, since the weeks had crept by and only one sail had been sighted.

The boys had enjoyed the experience in many ways, but at the same time they would be delighted to see the lone island vanish in the distance. Such healthy young spirits cannot long be satisfied to content themselves within such narrow borders. The world is too large and possesses too many attractions.

Neither of them slept well.

Three separate times did Teddy, with the cruiser's customary anxiety, creep out of the shelter in order to survey the starry heavens and see what the signs of promise were.

And on the last occasion he found Maro standing there on the open beach also taking an observation.

But the night came to an end, as all things earthly must.

Morning broke with a prospect for a hot day, but so long as this did not bring up a storm they cared little.

"The breeze is favorable," announced Teddy, as soon as he had appeared on the scene.

It had come up early, and was already dimpling the water in a coquettish way, heading out of the south-by-east.

"Yes, and we'll have all we want before the day is over, if I'm a judge of signs," remarked Maro.

Bravo was called upon for an opinion, and expressed himself to the effect that if it didn't storm they would probably have a fine day, which was about all he would commit himself to.

So the last meal on the famous sand-key was soon under way.

No more would the smoke of a camp-fire float seaward from this lone islet in the midst of the great Caribbean, and perhaps never again would fresh laughter sound along that beach, the scene of so many adventures in their short stay.

All preparations were soon made, for they had but a limited amount of luggage to look after.

"All aboard!" sang out the skipper of the little craft.

They had made use of the raft in order to get their things in the Loon, which had been anchored near the scene of Maro's adventure with the man-eater; and finally this last reminder of their Crusoe life was cast adrift.

Then the wind caught their sail, and they began to glide through the quiet water inside the jaws of land.

Outside it would be rougher, though not a circumstance as yet to what they must experience when the wind came up in force, and the swell of the ocean was felt.

They looked back to the little sand-key with more or less emotion.

The smoke of their fire still drifted lazily over the spit at the extreme end of the island, and somehow it seemed to be reproaching Teddy for his base desertion; but he threw all cares aside and with his usual jolly good nature trolled a ditty suited to the occasion.

CHAPTER XV.

VOYAGERS OF THE CARIBBEAN.

Well, they were off at last.

Before them stretched the vast and mysterious sea, on whose broad bosom the navies of the world had from time to time floated, and the history of which must include much that was interesting connected with the rise of the United States to a world power.

All those aboard the small boat thought about was the chance of sighting an island where they might find others of their kind, and be able to board some vessel bound for Jamaica, or any place in touch with the world.

Why, to hear those two lads talk you would imagine they must certainly have been marooned for a cycle of years instead of a few brief weeks. They speculated as to what wonderful events had come about in the civilized world, and whether either of the great nations which they represented had gone to war.

There was a sort of delightful uncertainty about thus being shut out from all news for a length of time; for like all young fellows of the present day they had become accustomed to reading every day all that had transpired around the world during the preceding twenty-four hours.

The boat justified all the praise which her proud master had ever bestowed upon her, for she certainly glided through the water like a veritable witch, and could, if necessary, beat up against the wind in a manner that quite took Maro's sailor heart by storm; for having spent his life pretty much in a seaport he knew little or nothing of these elegant little tricks which boat builders along the St. Lawrence fashion for those who delight to knock around in lakes or coast lagoons, cooking and sleeping aboard, and able to navigate wide sound or narrow creek as the whim dictates.

They ran before the wind during the whole morning.

Maro had his glass, and tried to see how long he could distinguish any sign of the little sand-key; but in an hour it had passed beyond range of his vision.

"That ends it," remarked Teddy, when he learned that Dickens Island had faded completely from view.

"Oh, I don't know," said Maro, with a malicious grin; "because, you remember everything comes back to that spot, and after we've sailed in a circle for a day or two, perhaps——"

"Drop it, old fellow," interrupted Teddy, hastily. "Even the best of prophets is liable to make a mistake some time or other. We will try to keep away and resist the supernatural attraction by having our noses pointed toward the west."

Thus far the wind had been favorable, and they believed they must have covered fully twenty miles since starting out.

Many an anxious glance began to be cast heavenward, for well they knew how treacherous these seas were, especially in surprises, and while they hoped for a continuance of smiling skies, at the same time they wished to be ready for trouble should it crop up.

Strange that they did not even sight a sail in any quarter.

Bravo said again and again that it was very mysterious, and he appeared to suspect there must be a Jonah aboard, though he gave no hint as to whom he believed merited such an evil title.

The breeze died completely out, so that there was not even a ripple on the surface of the sea.

That was bad enough, seeing that it meant delay, and with a short stock of food on hand this would be apt to hit them hard; but there was more coming.

"Yonder are clouds peeping over the horizon," announced Teddy, who, being a fresh-water navigator, was unusually nervous concerning the ugly humors of the sea; though he had surely shown the right spirit at the time he found himself swept through the inlet and out upon the tumultuous bosom of the stormy Atlantic.

By degrees familiarity would perhaps lessen these feelings of anxiety with regard to the possibilities of the ocean, though it could never bring contempt. The man who pretends to hold the mighty deep lightly is a deceiver through and through, for in its disturbed mood the ocean may well command respect from the boldest soul.

None of them felt very joyous over the appearance of the dark masses of vapor low down on the horizon. Hot as the sun seemed, they would willingly have borne his darts uncomplainingly, rather than accept the chances of a squall.

Twice had the stanch little craft defied the storm-king to do his worst, and the third time might finish the work.

Bravo idly pulled at the oars, moving the boat gently in the direction where their goal was situated; but it was more of a mechanical action on his part than any design to accomplish results.

They were helpless to avoid whatever was coming, and could only prepare against the rush of wind and water, hoping for the best.

Well, it was a false alarm, for when the clouds had covered the heavens the rain came down in a deluge, so that the voyagers found it necessary to bale their boat out in order to keep from being fairly swamped; but not a breath of gale accompanied the downpour.

They could hardly believe their eyes, and impulsive Teddy, soaked to the skin as he was, fairly shouted his appreciation.

They managed to add somewhat to their store of fresh water, as a result of the flood, so that instead of injuring their prospects it really added to their comfort.

And when the sun broke forth again a most delightful breeze sprang into existence, wafting them on their course, though it now came out of the northwest, and necessitated their running close-hauled.

With their fears relieved they became merry once more, and before the westering sun sank low enough to dazzle his vision Teddy took a long and earnest observation with his glass, in the hope that somewhere in the west he might pick up a glimpse of land.

But it was not so ordained.

They were fated to pass through other experiences ere reaching the finis of their eventful cruise.

That last hour of the blazing sun was very unpleasant, for the old fellow put in his best licks to torture their flesh, after the rain, and they were ready to heave a sigh of genuine relief when he condescended to fall out of sight, to cross the Pacific and gild the temples and kiosks of heathen China.

With the coming of evening the wind also sank temporarily to rest, as usual, and a solemn hush fell upon the sea.

How delightfully cool it became, once that scorcher of the skies had hied away to other fields! They stretched themselves, and the boys even took a dip in the briny, though urging their companions to keep a keen lookout for the dorsal fin of a shark; for since Maro's experience near the key both of them had entertained new respect for the piratical members of the shark tribe, and had no idea of furnishing a meal for so hungry a creature.

By eight o'clock the breeze saw fit to start into life again, and coming out of a quarter that still favored their purpose, so that the little cruiser was pushed right along.

That was certainly a night never to be forgotten.

The crowded condition of the boat prevented such comfort as might have followed had there been but two passengers instead of five.

It was a hard bed upon which they cast themselves, too, though extreme weariness caused them to ignore this fact. Teddy had made all needful arrangements for comfort in planning his long cruise, and was accustomed, when sleeping in the Loon, to blow up a rubber air mattress each night he bunked aboard; but during the wreck this arrangement had gone floating out to sea, and at any rate his condition at the time, with the cruiser half under water, would not have admitted the use of such luxuries.

Beggars have no right to be choosers, and this truth is often brought home to those who sail small craft with limited accommodations.

They took turns at keeping watch, so that one always held the tiller while the others slept.

For want of a better compass they guided their course by the heavenly luminaries that shone overhead. It was easy to pick out the Polar star, and one of the bright planets happened to lie exactly in the quarter whence the little craft was headed.

When it was Teddy's turn to steer he pulled his coat around him, as it had come on quite cool about midnight, and settled down to a long siege of it.

The wind still held out, and the cedar boat went merrily through the heaving sea, the water gurgling along her sides in a fashion to please the heart of one who delighted in cruising under any and all conditions.

He had spent many days and nights in that same tiny vessel, but none of his former experiences could compare with the present.

That glowing heavenly body flamed in the western sky, and guided him straight on. How could he do otherwise than think how these old-time worthies, the Wise Men of the East, were led by such a faithful finger-post.

Naturally, they were very eager for dawn to come, hoping that the day might disclose signs of land ahead.

Disappointment awaited them, however, for the same monotonous line that marked the watery horizon stretched away in every direction.

Neither of the boys said anything, but Bravo relieved himself of a choice variety of expressions concerning their miserable luck, and again gave stronger hints concerning his belief in the Jonah theory.

Maro, accustomed to reading character, believed they would be apt to have trouble with the coast mariner, if things did not improve before a great while.

He kept the gun near him, and was grimly resolved to use it if the occasion demanded heroic treatment.

Of course they had not arrived at the parting of the ways yet, and he sincerely hoped there would be no occasion to resort to such stern measures.

Their breakfast was eaten in melancholy silence.

Every one seemed to be wrapped up in his own thoughts.

The food was divided with impartiality, as was right; but Teddy imagined he saw the greedy eyes of the black rest longingly on the share that was passed to the young Canadian, and this circumstance caused more of those suspicions to creep into his mind.

He had read about all manner of terrible things being done by such descendants of the cannibals dwelling in the heart of Africa, when face to face with dire necessity—how they had naturally reverted to the horrible practices of their ancestors; and Teddy was determined that he would stand up for his rights so long as he had breath in his body.

The morning passed.

More breeze than they wanted swooped down upon them and made things fairly hum. The spray was even snatched from the crests of the big waves and sent flying to leeward in the shape of spume; while constant vigilance was required in order to keep the litlte boat from shipping vast quantities of water.

They dared show only a tiny bit of sail, and even then their progress was extremely rapid.

Ever and anon, when they crested a billow, Teddy would cling with one arm to the slender but stanch mast, while he clapped the glass to his eye and endeavored to make some discovery ahead.

It was not an easy task, so that it may not be wondered at that he failed to discover the land until it loomed up quite plainly.

It was a welcome sight to one and all, for surely it gave promise that their trials might be ended. That this could prove to be but another island in the tropic sea, void of human habitation, did not seem to occur to them at all, and yet such a thing was possible.

As they were bearing directly down upon the land and would be smashed upon the breakers unless great care was taken,

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Bravo, as the most experienced sailor on board, took the tiller.

Their only safe plan would consist in making a sweep around and coming up to the lee of the land that jutted out like a crooked finger.

Of course they rested in complete ignorance concerning the nature of the sea, and a thousand ragged rocks might be lying in their intended course, ready to tear the frail cedar boat into tatters; but they had no choice, and had to accept the risk.

It was a time of supreme anxiety.

Already the waters around them were boiling like a vast caldron, and at any instant Teddy expected to feel the dreadful quiver that would announce their coming in contact with a reef. When this occurred there would be small chance for any of them to escape through that whirling, churning mass of water.

Bravo held on with the tenacity of his kind, his teeth hard pressed together, his gray eyes burning with the intensity of his emotions, and his lantern jaws set grimly.

Maro rather admired the North Carolinan just then, he represented such bull-dog resolution to conquer or die.

It was a close shave.

Once or twice the boys gave themselves up for lost, for it seemed as though nothing under a miracle could prevent the boat from being smashed against some reef that reared its ugly head beyond; but as though some kind destiny had taken then in charge, they avoided all these perils, and finally began to find smoother water, showing that in some wonderful manner the promontory had been rounded.

Once more had the gallant little boat proved her title as a champion cruiser, and Teddy's heart swelled with pride, as well as thankfulness, for their escape, when he realized that the danger was a thing of the past.

Not until then did they think to even take a glance at the shore which was close by, and where the cocoanuts flaunted their feathery fronds in the strong breeze; and the first observation brought out mingled cries and chagrin from the voyagers, for lo, and behold, they beheld anchored in a bight the little sloop which Da Gama and his men had run away with when quitting the sand-key!

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this thrilling story of adventure. Cameras and patterns are still being forwarded free to each subscriber. See advertisements on pages thirteen and fifteen.

A Rule That Worked Both Ways.

Two senators had lunch together Saturday in the restaurant at their end of the Capitol. The bill was exactly $1. The senior of the two in point of service drew forth a bank note to pay the score.

"I have been here eighteen years," said he, philosophically, "and that note is about all I have to show for it."

"But," replied the other, known as a facetious senator, "what has the country to snow for it?"

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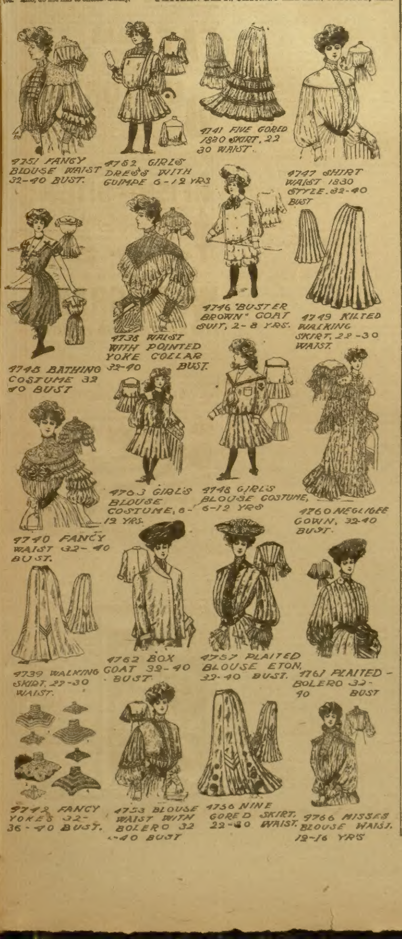
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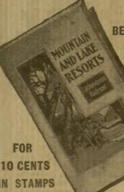

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

THE NAME OF OLD GLORY.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Old Glory! say, who,
By the ships and the crew,
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the blue,
Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear
With such pride everywhere
As you cast yourself free through the rapturous air
And leap out full length, as we're wanting you to?
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same
And the honor and fame so becoming to you?
Your stripes stroked in ripple; of white and of red,
With your stars and their glittering best overhead,
By day or by night,
Their delightfulest light
Laughing down from their little square heaven of blue!
Who gave you the name of Old Glory! Say who—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?
The old banner lifted, and, faltering then
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.

Old Glory, speak out! we are asking about
How you happened to "favor" a name, so to say,
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay
As we cheer it and shout in our wild, breezy way—
We—the crowd, every man of us, calling you that—
We—Tom, Dick and Harry—each swinging his hat
And hurrahing "Old Glory" like you were our kin,
When, Lord! we all know we're as common as sin!
And yet it just seems like you humor us all
And waft us your thanks, as we hail you and fall
Into line, with you over us, waving us on
Where our glorified, sanctified betters have gone.
And this is the reason we're wanting to know—
(And we're wanting it so—where our own fathers went we are willing to go.)
Who gave you the name of Old Glory—O ho!—
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?
The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill
For an instant, then wistfully sighed and was still.

Old Glory, the story we're wanting to hear
Is what the plain facts of your christening were:
For your name—just to hear it,
Repeat it and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit
As salt as a tear—
And seeing you fly and the boys marching by,
There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye
And an aching to live for you always—or die,
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.
And so, by our love
For you, floating above,
And the stars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,
Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?
Then the old banner leaped, like a sail in the blast,
And fluttered an audible answer at last—
And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it said:
By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead;
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,
My name is as old as the glory of God.
So I came by the name of Old Glory.

Butchers Bad Men.

Small Flossie was looking at a picture book, and finally said: "Mamma, why do men hunt lions and tigers? Isn't it wicked?"

"No, dear," replied the mother. "They are hunted because they kill sheep and poor little lambs."

"Then why don't men hunt the butchers, too?" asked Flossie.

Juvenile Theory.

"Now, boys," said the Sunday school teacher, addressing the primary class, "who can tell me why St. Peter stands at the golden gate?"

"Mebby he's layin' fer the feller what robbed him ter pay Paul," answered a small urchin.

FOURTH OF JULY.

U. C. MIDKIFF.

Ring, ye glad bells, from the steeple and towers!
Speak, ye loud cannon, with thunderous voice!
Spread the glad news through this broad land of ours,
Bid every heart on this day to rejoice!

Known far and wide is its wonderful story
In every land on the face of the earth;
For 'tis the day of America's glory—
The pride of our nation—the day of its birth!

Turn back today through our history's pages,
Search through this record of days fair and bright;
Many are there which in all coming ages
Ever will shine with a radiant light.

But, midst this legion of days brightly beaming,
One makes all others to pale 'neath its sway,
As the fair stars, with their silver light gleaming,
Fade in the light of the monarch of day.

Long years ago, 'midst the turmoil of battle,
The greatest of Liberty's children was born;
Its lullaby-song was the drum's startling rattle,
And thunder of cannon at evening and morn.

Reared in the school of privation and rigor,
Brave, strong and noble our country has grown;
Ever renowned for its progress and vigor—
Grandest of nations the world has e'er known!

Lift up your voices in praise and orations,
Fling out the banner of freedom on high;
The birthday is here of the greatest of nations;
Shout and rejoice! 'tis the Fourth of July!

Who Made Old Glory?

The first flag of the stars and stripes was made by Betsy Ross over a century and a quarter ago. General Washington is generally given credit for having designed it but doubtless a part of the design at least is the work of Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Harrison and a Mr. Lynch. These three were appointed a committee in 1775 by the continental congress to create a colonial flag and they decided upon one with thirteen bars, alternated red and white, with the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George in a field of blue. This flag was but little used. It was unfurled Jan. 1, 1776. A few months after (May 1776) General Washington with Col. George Ross and Robert Morris, called upon Betsy Ross and laid before her the plan for a flag containing thirteen stripes, alternate red and white with a blue field dotted with thirteen stars, and asked her if she could make it. She suggested a five-point star in place of the six-point one in the original plan which suggestion was adopted. This is the flag that Betsy Ross made 120 years ago in her little home at 239 Arch street, Philadelphia. This is Old Glory. Although made in May, 1776, it was not adopted by Congress until June 14, 1777. Betsy Ross sewed only thirteen stars into the flag which was flung to the breeze by the Continental armies, and now there are forty-five, but the strips will ever remain the same, seven red and six white. When the immortal Washington asked the Widow Ross whether she could make the flag, she replied: "I don't know, but I will try." She was a very skillful needlewoman and exquisitely neat and her success with the first American flag not only delighted General Washington but has delighted a rapidly increasing nation ever since. The flag which she cut out and sewed together with a nimble needle has had a progeny that may be counted by the millions, and it has been seen a-flutter on every sea, and is known in every land. So distinctive are the stars and stripes, and so grandly are they identified as human liberty, that one may say without fear of contradiction the American flag is recognized the world over the instant it is seen, and never does it fail to thrill the observer who knows the story of its origin. So rapid has been the march of events since the Stars and Stripes were first unfurled, and so populous and great have the states become, that it seems almost an eternity of time since Betsy Ross sat in her humble home and made the flag. And yet there are today or at least were recently living in Philadelphia descendants of Betsy Ross who heard the story from her own lips.

Collieries in Lancashire, England, are still on short time, most of them not running more than four and a half to five days a week.

She Was Surprised.

"You must be a good girl," said the nurse to little 4-year-old Flossie, "or you will go to the bad place when you die."

"An' where will 'ou go?" queried Flossie.

"To heaven, I hope," was the reply.

"My doodness," exclaimed the little miss in surprise. "Do Dod hire nurse girls, too?"

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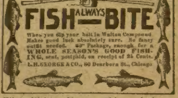

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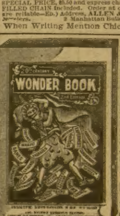

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